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‘This thing of darkness I acknowledge mine’: Edgar Allan Poe, Native Americans and
Property

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Abstract

This thesis investigates depictions of male dismemberment at Anglo and Native American contact sites in the tales of Edgar Allan Poe. It argues for Poe's subscription to a traditional theology that posits Neoplatonic concepts of the soul as mandatory for the constitution of rational humanity, and contends that he looks critically from this perspective at the contingency of national citizenship on property ownership in Jacksonian America. This investigation therefore involves an analysis of the link between property and national subjectivity, with emphasis on the recurrent trope in contemporary literature of the male body dismembered by 'Indian warfare', and how this body represents early America's uncertain claim to its national territory and, by extension, the constituting condition of property. This thesis also assesses epistemological and religious formations in Poe's fiction. Poe's tales often express a theological anxiety, with tensions created as the knowledge systems that define Poe's subjectivities subordinate spirituality to empirical mensuration and representation. Dramatizing this shift from teleology to epistemology and its disarticulating effect on the self are Poe's 'married women' stories. Keeping in mind links between soteriological paradigms and identity construction, methodologies are partially organized around Poe's presentation of women in his essays and tales, with particular emphasis on 'The Poetic Principle' and 'Berenice'. The interpretive apparatus gained by historical contextualization and the assessment of Poe's epistemological and religious formations is then mobilized towards reading the disarticulate male body as a nexus of Poe's concerns about property ownership, epistemology and theology, and analyzing his tales pertaining to colonial contact, particularly: 'The Masque of the Red Death', 'Morning on the Wissahiccon', 'The Man That Was Used Up', 'The Journal of Julius Rodman', and *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym of Nantucket*.

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Introduction: 'Let Dead Men Sleep in Death': Land and Disarticulate Masculinity in Jacksonian America

Samuel Taylor Coleridge remarks in *Table Talk* that 'the American Union has no *centre*, and it is impossible now to make one. The more they extend their borders into the Indians' land, the weaker will the national cohesion be'.¹ An analogy may be drawn between Coleridge's idea of America and Edgar Allan Poe's figure of Brevet Brigadier-General John A.B.C. Smith from 'The Man That Was Used Up', an Indian fighter who instantiates a centre-less union and cohesion lost through encroachment into 'the Indians' lands': captured and dismembered by 'Bugaboo and Kickapoo' Indians, Smith is physically reduced to an 'odd-looking bundle of something' dependent on his servant to re-constitute his body with prosthetic limbs.² Smith's disarticulation perpetuates a trope reiterated across the literature coincident with early and Jacksonian America's expansion into Indian territories: that of masculinity dismembered at contact zones between Native and Anglo-Americans. Vis-à-vis this historical and literary context, this thesis will examine the trope of male corporeal disarticulation at colonial contact sites in the fiction of Edgar Allan Poe. By 'disarticulation' I mean the corporeal condition of being incomplete, disjointed or dismembered. The term itself is usually associated with the field of forensic anthropology, where it describes the body's lost integrity. While 'articulation' denotes the physical state of being 'connected by joints', with variant definitions including the conjunction of parts to allow bodily motion, and the act of unifying the body, 'disarticulation' is contrarily defined as 'the separation or amputation of a bone at a joint'.³ In this thesis, I use the term 'disarticulation' in a broader sense to generally include bodies in an incomplete or incohered state. While imagery of corporeal disarticulation caused by colonial contact is not unique to Poe's literary corpus, or early nineteenth-century American literature, it is worthwhile to examine such bodies in these authorial and national contexts because they are nexus points for various discourses pertaining to national ideology and, to a lesser extent, theology, and they

¹ Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Table Talk* in *The Table Talk and Omniana of Samuel Taylor Coleridge* (London: Oxford Up, 1917), pp. 33-322, (p. 203).

² Edgar Allan Poe, 'The Man That Was Used Up', in *The Complete Tales and Poems of Edgar Allan Poe* (New York: Vintage Books, 1975), pp. 405-413 (p. 411).

³ William D. Haglund and Marcella H. Sorg, 'Advancing Forensic Taphonomy', in eds., *Advances in Forensic Taphonomy: Method, Theory and Archaeological Perspectives*, ed. by William D. Haglund and Marcella H. Sorg (New York: CRC Press, 2002), pp. 3-29 (p. 15).

signal ideas both idiosyncratic to Poe's writing and characteristic of his historical moment. Common to this trope both within and outside Poe's literature is its connection to property, particularly the ownership of land. Poe's figuration of the link between bodily disarticulation and property, and the manner in which he contextualizes it within a nuanced Neoplatonic theology, will be analyzed at length in this thesis. For now, it is necessary to put forward two questions which will be answered in this chapter: what is the link between male disarticulation and property? And, how is Poe cognizant of this link? The second question is answered more easily than the first. Poe's awareness of male dismemberment as a literary trope is given in the figure of Brevet Brigadier-General John A.B.C. Smith, as noted above, as well as in *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym*, when the *Jane Guy* explodes into a 'wild chaos of wood, and metal, and human limbs' to render the Tsalalians 'desperately mangled'.⁴ Yet to ascertain exactly why Poe employs these images, and to understand their implications, it is necessary to look outside Poe's literature to the Jacksonian era to see how the trope of male dismemberment in early American literature signifies an anxiety pertaining to the nation's ownership of its territory.

Analytical engagement with the trope of male disarticulation can be structured with theoretical considerations that reveal how the various dismemberments, immolations, and scalplings signal Anglo-America's unsuccessful attempts to displace Native American populations as the rightful, 'indigenous' inheritors of the national territory. This national attempt at displacement involves an incorporative mechanism in which tribal populations are swept from the land and contained inside the imagination of American subjects. In *The National Uncanny: Indian Ghosts and American Subjects*, Renée Bergland outlines the contingency of American subjectivity on claiming the land, and how the ownership of the land involves the psychic incorporation of the Native American Other into the American self:

By writing about Indians as ghosts, white writers effectively remove them from American lands, and place them, instead, within the American imagination. One result of the internalization of Indians is that the American individuals who "contain" Indians thereby constitute themselves as representative Americans, and even as representative Americas. [. . .] As Indians are made to vanish into the psychic spaces of America's

⁴ Edgar Allan Poe, *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym of Nantucket* (Markham: Penguin, 1976), p. 218.

citizens, the psychic space within each citizen is transformed into American territory, and each citizen comes to contain an America, to be *homo Americanus*.⁵

The act of incorporating Native Americans into the American imagination in order to own the national space and thereby 'become American' gains resonance by spelling out the psychoanalytic influences of Bergland's observation, particularly as they pertain to psychic identification. Broadly defined, identification denotes the process of incorporating an external Other into the ego with the corollary effects of ego and personality alteration. In 'Mourning and Melancholia', Sigmund Freud outlines the self's identification with an exterior other as contingent on a process of libidinal attachment followed by loss of the loved object:

An attachment of the libido to a particular person, had at one time existed; then, owing to a real or slight disappointment coming from the loved person, the object-relationship was shattered. The result was not the normal one of a withdrawal of the libido from this object and a displacement of it on to a new one, but something different [. . .] [T]he free libido was not displaced on to another object; it was withdrawn into the ego. There [. . .] [it] served to establish an identification of the ego with the abandoned object.⁶

Once the 'shadow of the object' falls 'upon the ego' a schism of the self occurs between 'the critical activity of the ego and the ego as altered by identification'.⁷ The ego's critical aspect thereafter scrutinizes the part of the ego altered by identification as though it were 'the forsaken object'.⁸ In dialogue with Freud, Judith Butler also conceptualizes identity, particularly gendered identity, as constructed by a series of identifications. She expands on, and makes central, Freud's theory by refiguring identification as the subject's 'intense emotional attachment' to an external Other that results in either 'wanting to have someone or wanting to be

⁵ Renée Bergland, *The National Uncanny: Indian Ghosts and American Subjects* (London: University press of New England, 2000), p. 4.

⁶ Sigmund Freud, 'Mourning and Melancholia', in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, ed. by James Strachey, 24 vols (London: The Hogarth Press, 1962), XIV, pp. 243-258 (p.249).

⁷ Freud, p. 249.

⁸ Freud, p. 249.

that someone'.⁹ When an emotional attachment to a loved object is disrupted by loss, then that loss becomes 'suspended through a melancholic and imaginary incorporation' of the Other 'into the psyche'.¹⁰ This installment of the Other into the self 'establishes the permanent incapacity of that "self" to achieve self-identity', because 'the disruption of the Other at the heart of the self is the very condition of that self's possibility'.¹¹ In other words, only through the process of melancholic loss and psychic incorporation is the self even capable of becoming a self.

Although published seventy-one years after Poe's death in 1849, this passage from Frederick Jackson Turner's *The Frontier in American History* serves to exemplify Anglo-American incorporation of the Native American in order to become 'aboriginal':

The wilderness masters the colonist. It finds him a European in dress, industries, tools, modes of travel, and thought. It takes him from the railroad car, and puts him in the birch canoe. It strips off the garments of civilization and arrays him in the hunting shirt and moccasin. It puts him in the log cabin of the Cherokee and Iroquois and runs an Indian palisade around him. Before long he has gone to planting Indian corn and plowing with a sharp stick; he shouts the war cry and takes the scalp in orthodox Indian fashion. In short, at the frontier the environment is at first too strong for the man.¹²

An incorporative act is seen in the way the 'European' gradually 'becomes' Cherokee or Iroquois by exchanging the railroad car for a birch canoe, by wearing moccasins, building an Indian palisade, and finally shouting war cries and taking scalps. Yet what stands out is not only the process of 'becoming' Native American, but how this incorporation is intrinsically tied to national territory. It seems as though, for Turner, there is a principle in the 'environment' itself, the 'strength' of the land, which somehow (yet naturally) transforms the 'colonist' into an 'orthodox Indian'. Effectively, Turner's statement elides America's historical removal of its Native American populations in order to possess their lands, and in this discursive act he reverses a process of desire so that it is the land itself that makes the colonist aboriginal, as opposed to

⁹ Judith Butler, 'Imitation and Gender Insubordination', in *Inside/ Out: Lesbian Theories, Gay Theories*, ed. by Diana Fuss (London: Routledge, 1991), pp. 13-31, (p. 26).

¹⁰ Butler, p. 26.

¹¹ Butler, p. 26.

¹² Frederick Jackson Turner in Michael Paul Rogin, *Fathers and Children: Andrew Jackson and the Subjugation of the American Indian* (New York: Vintage Books, 1975), pp. 77-78.

desiring ownership of the land, displacing its Native American populations, and justifying displacement after the fact. In this regard even though his statement is ideologically laden it still hits on an important longing: that of being ‘aboriginal’, claiming indigeneity, and staking a rightful ‘native’ inheritance of the land.

In pointing up psychoanalysis in a historically-based thesis I am not precluding discussion of texts and events amenable to naturalizing a ‘universal’ theory, but rather framing an examination of a drive to displace that was mobilized in specific ways and for specific reasons in Jacksonian America. Arguably the most important reason was that the displacement of tribal populations, most notably through Indian Removal, helped stabilize property claims based on speculation. Andrew Jackson tried to stabilize property values by removing Native Americans from the landscape, and in so doing, forcefully enact an incontestable legitimacy of title. What Jackson was looking for was a ‘centre’, or ‘essence’ of land ownership. Jackson’s desire to stabilize ownership through Indian Removal can be illustrated first by looking at the importance of land in early America, then at Jackson’s motivation for attempting to locate an absolute title to property. Once the reasons for displacement are outlined we can then analyze how the disarticulate male body signals a failure to displace.

In late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century America land was the major economic resource, the major determiner of social status, and the major source of political power. It created most American fortunes, provided the basis for economic development, and fuelled private and public business transactions. On the frontier, land was a medium of exchange and served as money when currency was scarce: land titles could pay for services, pay off gambling debts, and be directly bartered for merchandise and slaves.¹³ Land also dominated the eighteenth-century economy: western lands were the single most important source for economic development, and most colonial fortunes were made from land, putting landed gentry at the top of early American society.¹⁴ Land also played a role in politics, since most leading families acquired the prerequisite fortunes and estates to enter political leadership by way of land speculation.¹⁵ It was also the major source of public money in early America, because land sales provided the American government with revenues without which it could not survive. Land even contributed to bringing about the Revolution: English efforts to contain the settlement east

¹³ Rogin, p. 79.

¹⁴ Rogin, p. 80.

¹⁵ Rogin, p. 80.

of the Appalachian Mountains endangered the value of American land holdings, thereby antagonizing leading speculators in western lands, like George Washington, into protecting their fortunes.¹⁶

Those who made fortunes in land did not make them through work or agriculture, but through speculation. Land derived its value from the potential it held for the possibility of future settlement or projects, such as crops, towns, roads, or canals, and this potential is what caused land to rise in value, and what gave it its commodity importance.¹⁷ The possibility of fortune gained through speculation was a primary motive for opening the western lands for migration, thinning out the frontier, and pushing it westward. Not only did speculators lead or sponsor pioneer communities, but their influence was often felt in western constitutions written to attract settlers, in western demands for greater representation, and in democratic pressures for the cheap purchase of western lands.¹⁸ Yet while speculation built fortunes and pushed western migration, it was also fraught with legal and financial conflicts about title and ownership. These land-title conflicts were often very complex, and created huge amounts of financial insecurity.¹⁹ Sometimes conflicts over land title occurred when states issued enormous land grants, or sold large tracts, which lay in Native American territories; at other times they arose when states issued warrants for lands that were still disputed with other states; still other conflicts came about when states issued military warrants for land in unsurveyed, unlocated, and unspecified areas to soldiers in the French, Indian, and Revolutionary wars, who then sold these warrants to speculators. All of these causes of conflict enormously proliferated land titles and caused them to vary widely in legitimacy and value.²⁰

The uncertainty of land-titles was exacerbated by surveyors who were either too inexperienced or too loosely bound by moral standards, aiming to acquire large tracts for themselves and associates. They marked lines carelessly, left poor markings on the land that vanished over time, or followed natural boundaries, such as rivers, trees and ridges, which were transitional and shifting. Claiming title could be a dubious matter as well. Typically, a claimant registered his land at a land office that was often hundreds of miles from his actual property. Then he left to survey the land and returned to enter the boundaries. Fees were required at both

¹⁶ Rogin, pp. 79-81.

¹⁷ Rogin, p. 80.

¹⁸ Rogin, p. 81.

¹⁹ Rogin, p. 90.

²⁰ Rogin, p. 90.

stages, and failure to complete the process invalidated the title. Not only would the great distance between land and office create discrepancies between records and actual frontier transactions, but faulty claim-filing would result in imperfect, overlapping titles that no one would discover for years, rendering the actual title incapable of being reconstructed. A series of other factors destabilized land titles even further. Frauds were extensively practiced at every step of the land claims process, and forged grants could plague subsequent holders who bought their lands in good faith. Lands could be derived from private agreements with Indian villages or elected chiefs. Squatters could claim property rights that were recognizable in court and which conflicted with other legally established claims; and these same squatters' claims could be circulated through sale to speculators or new settlers. Liens created by imperfectly foreclosed mortgages, conflicts among relatives or creditors over inheritance, and failure to pay taxes could create conflicting claims to the same land, and the transfer of such imperfect titles only multiplied the uncertainties of ownership.²¹

One speculator who made his fortunes through land sales and rose to the status of America's elite was Andrew Jackson.²² But Jackson too was nearly ruined by the vicissitudes of speculation when he purchased land from David Allison, a former Nashville lawyer involved in speculations of questionable legality. Jackson received twenty-five cents an acre from Allison for land he bought in Tennessee for ten cents, and used Allison's notes to buy merchandise and establish a store. The problem was that Allison was on the verge of bankruptcy, and in the autumn of 1795 he went broke. Jackson had endorsed Allison's notes and now had to pay them back as they became due. To cover the first note, Jackson sold his store and stock for 33,000 acres of land, and then sold the land. But as more and more notes became due he was forced to sell more and more holdings. Jackson briefly sought to escape these debts, but eventually he paid them all back over several years. It was a setback from which he never fully recovered, and his experience with Allison not only left Jackson with a permanent hostility to paper notes and those who tried to escape debts, but, as Michael Rogin observes, it 'drove him back to the root of property ownership'.²³

Jackson's quest to find a stable root for property ownership brought him into conflict twenty-five years later with Tennessee's occupancy laws, and with John Overton, his long-time

²¹ Rogin, pp. 90-91.

²² Rogin, p. 105.

²³ Rogin, p. 95.

friend and the business partner with whom he had bought up several of the Allison lands. The occupancy laws were used to protect holdings against old or forgotten transactions, and many established speculators such as Overton favoured them because they secured their own sales and holdings. Of course, absentee and claims speculators, as well as land lawyers, opposed occupancy laws. So did purists over contractual rights, such as Andrew Jackson, who allied himself with the litigators and politicians who stood against Overton and occupancy laws.²⁴ Jackson's quarrel with Overton reached back to their dealings with Allison. In 1811 Jackson had made arrangements with Allison's heirs to secure land Allison had mortgaged, and which Jackson had sold. Jackson's claims on this land overlapped with Overton's, who claimed title through the original Allison foreclosure in 1798.²⁵ Overton had sold a considerable amount of the Allison property, and now, twenty-five on, he was being forced to defend his ancient transactions. As Rogin explains, "rectifiers" were dangerous in America, because property was theft. Title derived from force and fraud against Indians, from speculation, and from manipulation of the law. The preoccupation with property rights, pursued in litigation, was an effort to build a firm foundation on quicksand'.²⁶ Overton understood these aspects of ownership, and knew it was 'best not to inquire too deeply into original title'.²⁷ In contrast, Jackson allied himself with claims speculators and land lawyers, standing against the rights of small farmers and other popular interests, in order to 'purify' a history of 'dubious moral and legal title'.²⁸ Jackson's search for a 'pure root' of legitimate property title would send him back to the Native Americans by 1821, 'not to return their land, but to end all doubts about America's right to it'.²⁹ The Tennessee elite had no qualms with Jackson's policies about removing Indians, and supported his presidential ambitions. Jackson's efforts to 'ground tainted acquisitions in law and natural right' would come to characterize his political course.³⁰

We can read Jackson's struggle to locate an absolute title to land ownership as a quest to stabilize his own masculine identity by discussing the ideological connections between the creation of property and the establishment of civic identity. In his discussion of the American Enlightenment, Robert A. Ferguson outlines Kantian principles of politics and natural law as

²⁴ Rogin, pp. 97-98.

²⁵ Rogin, p. 99.

²⁶ Rogin, p. 100.

²⁷ Rogin, p. 100

²⁸ Rogin, p. 99.

²⁹ Rogin, p. 100.

³⁰ Rogin, p. 101.

they address ‘realities in American politics’, namely: ‘the freedom of every member of human society as a human being’, the ‘equality of each with all others as subjects’, and the ‘independence of each member of a commonwealth as a citizen’.³¹ Yet while such principles should ‘guarantee the basic rights of all persons in the enlightened state’, they also carry exclusive qualifications: freedom only thrives in a patriotic government where everyone ‘regards the commonwealth as a maternal womb and the land as the paternal ground which he himself sprang’; equality does not preclude the inequality of ‘physical or mental superiority’; and the independence of the citizen is contingent on the ability to support oneself through property ownership.³² While Native Americans could claim the ‘land as [their] paternal ground’, any assertions to property ownership fall ‘to the charge that relative superiority rightly determines degree of possession’.³³

The importance of land in the construction of subjectivity is further brought into relief when considering John Locke’s ‘Of Property’ as a discourse that facilitates ideological access to the North American continent. In *By the Law of Nature: Form and Value in Nineteenth-Century America*, Howard Horwitz notes that Locke’s statement ‘in the beginning, all the World was *America*’ was well known, and, as long as one elides the presence of an already existent Indian population, could justify America as ‘the aboriginal liberal experiment in [...] creating property from wilderness’ due to its absence of European institutions.³⁴ This Lockean transformation of wilderness into property inextricably involves the self, but also enables the self to come into being. As Horwitz explains, ‘labor engenders property (appropriates nature) because the transaction between labor and nature realizes personhood, for, in Locke’s view, labor is simultaneously the vessel and constitutive element of the self’.³⁵ Put another way, the interaction between labor and nature is constitutive in ‘two directions’: it creates the ‘property’ of the self, and it creates a valued, material property external to self when the self mixes with nature. According to Locke, ‘every Man has a *Property* in his own *Person*; this no Body has any right to

³¹ Robert A. Ferguson, *The American Enlightenment, 1750-1820* (London: Harvard UP, 1997), p. 156, Immanuel Kant, ‘On the Common Saying: “This May be True in Theory, but it does not Apply in Practice”’, in *Kant: Political Writings*, ed. by Hans Reiss (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1991), pp. 61-92 (p. 74).

³² Ferguson, p. 156, Kant, p. 74, p.75, p. 78.

³³ Ferguson, p. 156.

³⁴ Howard Horwitz, *By the Law of Nature: Form and Value in Nineteenth-Century America* (Oxford, Oxford UP, 1986), p 6, John Locke, ‘Of Property’, *Two Treatises of Government*, ed. by Peter Laslett (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2005), pp. 285-302 (p. 301).

³⁵ Horwitz, p. 7.

but himself”.³⁶ Based on the principle that ‘each man owns himself’, the self is enabled to appropriate nature by infusing nature with the self. That is, one creates and owns possessions by fixing one’s property in nature through labor.³⁷ When one ‘mix[es] his *Labour*’ with nature, he ‘join[s] to it something that is his own, and thereby makes it his *Property*’. At the same time, though, it is the act of labor itself which ‘*begins the Property*’.³⁸ For Horwitz, ‘this definitive property infusing the body and all action is, because divine in origin, a constitutive principle of self-possession’. However, this quadripartite correlation between nature, labor, property and self foregrounds a tautological reasoning: ‘self owns property because it owns itself; at the same time, the self owns itself only because realized by and invested in property’. For this reason property is essential to constitution of the self. Although labor is central to the transformation of nature to property, because it is already one’s own and expresses the ‘reason granted humankind by God’, it is not clear if any one component governs the concatenations from nature to self ‘nor what the verifying mechanism is’. As well, due to the fact that the ‘self not only creates property but is realized and known only through property’, the self’s ‘inalienable qualities’ can only be realized by alienable attributes.³⁹

When considering the correlation between property and the self, Jackson’s quest to find a stabilizing root of property title and an incontestable inheritance of the land is also an anxious desire to find the condition that could naturalize his own gendered self. This tie between property, particularly land, and the naturalizing essence, or ‘root’, comes into relief by again considering psychoanalytically-inflected theory, particularly Homi Bhabha’s model of masculinity put forth in his essay, ‘Are You a Man or a Mouse?’. Bhabha describes masculinity as a ‘prosthetic process’ that sets itself up as the privileged position that normalizes and naturalizes difference, but also oscillates into a “neurotic” acting out of its power and powerlessness’, thereby necessitating a continual interrogation and testing to ‘prove’ its naturalness. As a ‘prosthetic process’, masculinity is molded to a large extent by its national context, and Bhabha illustrates the formative effect the nation-state has on masculinity by referring to Johann Fichte’s statement in his *Addresses to the German Nation* (1807-1808), which outlines ‘Naturalness [and manliness] on the German side’, and ‘arbitrariness and

³⁶ Locke, p. 287.

³⁷ Horwitz, p. 7.

³⁸ Locke, p. 288, p. 289.

³⁹ Horwitz, pp. 7-8.

artificiality [and effeminacy] on the foreign side'.⁴⁰ The principle agent for structuring the masculine subject in accordance with national ideals is the domestic father, who serves as a metaphor for the nation. The masculine subject perceives the national Father as holding the condition that enables the 'prosthetic' masculinity to become natural and complete. When the subject identifies with the national Father he sees himself as containing the naturalizing condition. The subject's instinct for respect stems from his service to the national Father, from his struggles to make natural the prosthetic masculinity; or, as Fichte describes *amor patriae*, 'This is the natural love of the child for the father, not as the guardian of his sensual well-being, but as the mirror from which his own self-worth or worthlessness is reflected for him'.⁴¹ However, an anxiety is already manifested due to the gendering of the national paternal metaphor, and to the national subject, as it oscillates between naturalness and performance. *Amor patriae* is an 'anxious love', particularly 'when we recall that, in a psychoanalytic sense, anxiety is a "sign" of a danger implicit in/on the threshold of identity, *in between* its claims to coherence and its fears of dissolution, "between identity and non-identity, internal and external"''.⁴²

Read against Bhabha's model of masculinity, Jackson's campaign to stabilize the shifting values of land speculation signals an attempt to find the naturalizing condition that could ground masculinity as a 'prosthetic process'. Jackson's desire for absolute title is emblematic for masculine identity in early nineteenth-century America. Indeed, David G. Pugh points to a 'Jacksonian mystique' that 'expressed the sentiments of the time', with Jackson himself serving as the 'nation's first official prototype of the manliness ethos'.⁴³ Simultaneously, Jackson did not create the memes and worldviews of his era: as John William Ward points out, he was a product of them, a man of the times, who embodied an answer to the anxieties which the nation felt even before his ascendancy to office.⁴⁴ When considering property both as an absolute claim to the land, and as the condition that naturalizes the masculine self, anxiety, or the fear of 'dissolution' existent in masculinity's 'coherence', finds its representation in the disarticulate body that signals where the 'absolute' ownership of the land is jeopardized, where the Native

⁴⁰ Homi K. Bhabha, 'Are You a Man or a Mouse?', in *Constructing Masculinity*, ed. by Maurie Berler, Brian Walls and Simon Watson (New York: Routledge, 1995), pp. 57-65 (p. 58).

⁴¹ Bhabha, p. 59.

⁴² Bhabha, p. 60.

⁴³ David G. Pugh, *Sons of Liberty: The Masculine Mind in Nineteenth-Century America* (London: Greenwood Press, 1983), p. xvii.

⁴⁴ John William Ward in Pugh, p. 42.

American inheritance fails. In other instances of early American literature, though, the broken male body is both an anxious site, and has some signs of being symptomatic in that it represents repressed instincts that cause ‘alterations on the subject’s own body’ because it is not ‘permitted to impinge on the outer world’.⁴⁵ While symptoms are caused by repression they are actually perceived as isolated from the ego, maintaining their ‘existence outside the organization of the ego and independently of it’ and owning the ‘privilege of extra-territoriality’. When the ego comes into contact with the symptom it attempts to bind it to itself and ‘incorporate it into its organization’.⁴⁶ Freud describes the symptom as having ‘a kind of frontier-position with a mixed cathexis’, compromising needs for gratification as well as punishment, scrutinized by the super-ego, but also representing irruptions made into the ego.⁴⁷ The male body dismembered by colonial contact shares symptomatic qualities, in that it is also ‘extra-territorial’ and occupies a ‘frontier-position’, but is simultaneously brought about by discursive mechanisms interior to the nation. In cases where the dismembered male body is not treated as a site of anxiety, it stands in for a site where access to the land is threatened, but simultaneously where it is re-affirmed, as will be discussed in relation to Richard Johnson’s wounded frame in Richard Emmons’s drama, *Tecumseh; or, the Battle of the Thames, A National Drama in Five Acts*. However, while the disarticulate Anglo-American body can re-affirm the national inheritance of the land, this right is more often expressed by way of the disarticulate Native American body. The various meanings of the disarticulate body are illustrated through analysis of the popular literature of early American, including Thomas Jefferson’s *Notes on the State of Virginia*, various captivity narratives, *The History of Lewis and Clark*, and Emmons’s *Tecumseh*.

Disarticulate Bodies in Early American Literature

Referring back to Kant’s qualifications for national citizenship, we see how citizenship as contingent on a ‘paternal’ relationship with the land informs Thomas Jefferson’s *Notes on the State of Virginia*, particularly in relation to his ideal of a unary American bloodstock ‘springing’

⁴⁵ Sigmund Freud, *Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety*, ed. by Alix Strachey, The International Psychoanalytic Library, XXVIII (London: Hogarth Press, 1936), p. 27.

⁴⁶ Freud, pp. 32, 34.

⁴⁷ Freud, p. 34.

from the soil. For Jefferson, the American racial stock needs to become ‘aboriginal’ by bonding with the paternal ground, and thereby establishing rightful stakes to the land and national citizenship. In his discussion of the *Notes*, Kelsall outlines Indian displacement as a process by which the Native Americans, whose “‘rights’ [to the land] are derived from “‘immemorial occupancy’”, are defeated by American colonizers, ‘safely lamented, memorialized and [culturally] incorporated’, thereby allowing a bond between Americans and the land that reaches further back in history, and establishes a more deeply rooted national culture.⁴⁸ According to Kelsall, Jefferson’s ideas of American land and identity reflect pervasive Fichtean theories regarding the *volk* and *reinheit*. The *volk* are those ‘whose purity comes from their proximity to their own land and “the face of the earth”’, for whom the land is a place of hearth and home, and the generative seed of the husbandman, representing what is healthy in a nation as opposed to what is unsound. *Reinheit* refers to the purity of the native stock of the ‘self-generative, self-sustaining unitary volk’.⁴⁹

Jefferson’s anxiety over preserving the *reinheit* of the ‘native’ stock is foregrounded in his argument that immigration of a foreign stock already indoctrinated by the tenets of ‘absolute monarchies’, would ‘infuse’ the American legislature ‘with their spirit, warp and bias its direction, and render it a heterogeneous, incoherent, distracted mass’. Racial purity, in contrast, would strengthen a government that is ‘more homogenous, more peaceable, [and] more durable’. However, in Jefferson’s *Notes* possibilities for racial corruption already exist, not only in a slave population, a ‘blot in our country’, that ‘increases as fast, or faster, than the whites’, but in the population of ‘aborigines’ as well.⁵⁰ As Boelhower states, ‘throughout the colonial period [. . .] it was the Indian as ethnic who raised the first major challenge to the idea of a homogenous nation and brought about the first deep laceration in the American quest for identity’. As the instantiation of European-America’s first radical Other, ‘the American self inevitably had to be defined in relation to him’. While the Indian could be removed from ‘the communitary structure of the self as American’, he still remains as an ‘absent presence within the assimilationist logic

⁴⁸ Malcolm Kelsall, *Jefferson and the Iconography of Romanticism: Folk, Culture and the Romantic Nation* (New York: Palgrave, 1999), pp. 96-97.

⁴⁹ Kelsall, pp. 91-92.

⁵⁰ Thomas Jefferson, *Notes on the State of Virginia*, ed. by William Peden (Chapel Hill: North Carolina UP, 1955), pp. 84-87.

of *reductio ad unum*'.⁵¹ Anxiety regarding a collapse between self and Other, and the need to prevent racial corruption, manifest in a violent act of 'border maintenance' in the fourth Appendix to the *Notes*. Comprised of collected documents, the fourth Appendix details the murder of Chief Logan's family, in which his brother was shot for wearing a white man's coat and his pregnant sister disemboweled and impaled, because of a 'perceived threat' in which the Indian other had 'taken on the form of the self, and dishonored the white man's race': specifically, Logan's brother put on an American hat and coat, 'strut[ed] about' with 'arms akimbo', and called a white man a 'son of a bitch'.⁵² This action thereby provoked the Americans to the murder and symbolic genocide of the alien blood-stock. In retaliation the Indians 'cut to pieces (and presumably castrated) and scattered (repeatedly)' a white victim 'thus denying a dead enemy sepulcher in their lands', symbolically prohibiting American bonding with the soil, and undermining the self-generative aspect of the *volk*.⁵³

While Kelsall discusses specifically the *Notes*, an American anxiety regarding the inability to claim the 'paternal ground' and self-generate its 'race' manifests in later sites of Anglo and Native American violence. For example, the *Journal of Robert McAfee* details the discovery of deceased American troops disinterred by Indians during the War of 1812:

Came to the bones of 13 or 14 of our countrymen killed at the River Razin the 22nd January last and which had been interred by Col. Johnson the 29th of June last, the Indians having dug them up. (they cry aloud for revenge!) the bones of men lay at intervals for three miles until we come to the River Rezin [sic] The Chimneys of the houses in which the Indians, burnt our wounded prisoners [sic] and their bones burnt to cinders yet lie open to the calls of vindictive justice of a much injured country.⁵⁴

Here, McAfee directly relates the disruption of American bonding with the land to the integrity of a 'much injured country', underscoring the need to claim the land, and how such sites of violence indicate where identification with the land cannot be made and claims of rightful

⁵¹ William Boelhower, *Through a Glass Darkly: Ethnic Semiosis in American Literature* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1987), pp. 44-45.

⁵² Jefferson, *Notes*, p. 256, Kelsall, p. 103, Jefferson, p. 256.

⁵³ Kelsall, p. 103.

⁵⁴ McAfee in Leland Winfield Meyer, *The Life and Times of Colonel Richard M. Johnson of Kentucky* (New York: Columbia UP, 1932), p. 121.

inheritance to the land cannot be naturalized. Similar anxieties pervade the popular captivity narrative, 'The Remarkable Adventures of Jackson Johonnet of Massachusetts' (1793), in which the protagonist details how a fellow captive is scalped, 'struck' 'on the head with tomahawks', stripped naked, 'stabbed' with 'knives in every sensitive part of the body, and left' 'weltering in blood'.⁵⁵ Following this scene of dismemberment, Johonnet comes across the site of General Braddock's defeat against French and Indian forces, where the bones of the English army still remain 'unconsumed' and 'strewed on the ground'.⁵⁶ The underlying message is that unless Americans remove the Indians and claim their paternal land then they, like the British, will be exterminated from the country.

While such tropes of corporeal disarticulation indicate a disruption between American subjectivities and their 'paternal ground', the ability to regenerate national subjects is also contingent on the ability to create property, as outlined by Kant. This conflation between the creation of property and the regeneration of national citizens is fleshed out in the 'Affecting History of the Dreadful Distresses of Frederic Manheim's Family', which tells the story of an 'industrious German', Manheim, and his twin teenage daughters, who are all captured by Indians while he is 'at work', then taken into the woods, where two warriors get into a disagreement 'about whose property the girls should be, as they had jointly seized them'.⁵⁷ To 'terminate the dispute', the chiefs of the party decide that the 'prisoners who gave rise to the contention, should be destroyed'.⁵⁸ The girls are then stripped, 'tied each to a sapling', pitched from knees to shoulders with 'upwards of six hundred' splinters 'sharpened' at one end and dipped in 'melted turpentine' at the other, and then set on fire, exhibiting a 'scene of monstrous misery'. Only after they have 'lost almost every resemblance to the human form' do the 'helpless virgins' finally sink 'down into the arms of their deliverer, Death!!'.⁵⁹

⁵⁵ Jackson Johonnet, 'The Remarkable Adventures of Jackson Johonnet of Massachusetts', ed. by Paul Royster (Boston: Samuel Hall, 1793) <http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/etas/32> [accessed 2007] p. 5.

⁵⁶ Johonnet, p.11.

⁵⁷ 'Affecting History of the Dreadful Distresses of Frederic Manheim's Family', in *Affecting History of the Dreadful Distresses of Frederic Manheim's Family. To which are added, The Sufferings of JOHN CORBLY's Family. An Encounter between a White Man and two Savages. Extraordinary Bravery of a Woman. Adventures of Capt. ISAAC STEWART. Deposition of MASSEY HERBESON. And an Account of the Destruction of the Settlements of Wyoming* (Bennington: Collier & Stockwell, 1802), pp. 5-7 (pp. 5, 6).

⁵⁸ 'Manheim', p. 7.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

Although this scene of immolation involves Manheim's twin daughters, it allegorizes the husbandman's lost regenerative potential as caused by an inability to create property. Tellingly, the Indians arrive while the 'industrious' Manheim is 'at work', and the immolation of Manheim's virginal, teenage daughters gives physical form to this important disruption, their loss of 'resemblance to the human form' symbolizing the lost potential for the American blood-stock to regenerate through the production of property. Underlining how the daughters instantiate Manheim's lost ability to create property is the way their immolation comes about when the Indians argue about 'whose property the girls should be', thereby signaling how the potential to create property has slipped into Indian hands. A similar connection between property and regeneration is also seen in the 'Sufferings of JOHN CORBLY's Family'. After detailing how his infant is 'killed and scalped' by Indians, his wife shot 'through the body', and his son dispatched with a hatchet sunk 'into his brains', Corbly refers to his two scalped-but-living daughters as 'a great deal of trouble and expense' due to the fact that he is 'to worldly circumstances, almost ruined'.⁶⁰ The image of scalping further entrenches the link between property and regenerative loss, because scalps were considered property.⁶¹ Just as Manheim's daughters instantiate the ability to regenerate citizens through the ability to create property, so do Corbly's; and although their 'labour' is extreme violence, in scalping the daughters the Indians appropriate the Anglo-American potential to create property and regenerate its 'race'.

Reversing depictions of Anglo-American dismemberment as symbolic of an inability to perpetuate the American 'race' by establishing property are depictions of Native American dismemberment that serve to affirm America's right to claim the land and transform it into property. 'An Encounter Between a White Man and Two Savages' details an altercation between a plantation owner named David Morgan and two Indians, which leaves the first 'shot dead upon the spot' and the second stabbed in the stomach. Morgan escapes the conflict, makes his way to a nearby fort, then returns to 'the scene of the action' with a war party to find the surviving Indian 'in the top of a fallen tree, where he had picked the knife out of his body, after which had come out parched corn, &c.' On first sight the Indian salutes the party with "'How do

⁶⁰ 'Sufferings of JOHN CORBLY's Family' in *Manheim*, pp. 8-9.

⁶¹ J. Long, *Voyages and Travels of an Indian Interpreter and Trader, Describing the Manners and Customs of the North American Indians* (London: Printed for the Author, 1791), pp. 22-23. Long describes how scalps are 'extended on three hoops, dried in the sun, and rubbed over with vermilion. Some of the Indians in time of war, when scalps are well paid for, divide one into five or six parts, and carry them to the nearest post, in hopes of receiving a reward proportionate to the number'.

do, broder, how do do, broder?'''; however, the war party's 'brotherhood to him extend[s] only to tomahawking, scalping, and, to gratify some peculiar feelings of their own', skinning them both and making 'drum heads of their skins'.⁶² While the two Indians embody 'Indian obstacles' to Anglo-America's ownership of the soil, they also stand for Indian lands, with Morgan's victory affirming settler rights to invest the new continent with property. Indeed, both Indians literally become property when their skins are manufactured into 'drum heads', and before the second Indian is even dead he already leaks commodities by way of 'parched corn' – a commodification emphasized by a 'devouring' trope when Morgan bites the Indian's finger and gives it a 'severe screw with his teeth' during their initial struggle.⁶³ The 'Encounter' also reflects themes about regeneration when the two Native Americans are originally spotted while Morgan watches his children work on his plantation, while the Indian's exclusion from the 'brotherhood' of white settlers implies his foregone filial bond with the soil that the settlers share.⁶⁴

Another important detail in the 'Encounter' is the suggested lowered intellect of the Native American when he asks, 'How do do, broder?', which serves to illustrate the Kantian ideal that relative superiority determines degree of possession. At the same time, such depictions enact Anglo-American projections of irrationality onto Native American minds and bodies, thereby serving to stabilize the competitive forms of Anglo-American masculinities that emerged in response to the volatile political and economic climate of the new nation's first decades. These competitive ways of being required 'individual men to internalize in terms of personal responsibility the political and economic vicissitudes' of the times, resulting in patterns of anxiety amongst white men that 'intensified [a] need for management and control'. One of the early nation's means for establishing stable self-identity, and especially stable national manhood, was an act of racial projection against an 'Other identity whose peculiarities needed "civilizing"'. Enacting racial projection relocated the fragmenting anxieties onto white men's Others, cohered a self-narrative of 'manly control', and restored a 'unitary sense of self' through 'performance of boundary maintenance'. As Dana Nelson explains, 'the abstracting identity of white/ national

⁶² 'An Encounter between a White Man and two Savages', in *Affecting History of the Dreadful Distresses of Frederic Manheim's Family. To which are added, The Sufferings of JOHN CORBLY's Family. An Encounter between a White Man and two Savages. Extraordinary Bravery of a Woman. Adventures of Capt. ISAAC STEWART. Deposition of MASSEY HERBESON. And an Account of the Destruction of the Settlements of Wyoming* (Bennington: Collier & Stockwell, 1802), pp. 10-13 (pp. 12-13).

⁶³ 'Encounter', p. 13.

⁶⁴ 'Encounter', pp. 11, 13.

manhood found one means for stabilizing its internal divisions and individual anxieties *via* imagined projections into, onto, against Indian territories, Indian bodies, Indian identities', and she illustrates these white/ national projections in her analysis of Nicholas Biddle's 1814 edition of *The History of the Lewis and Clark Expedition*.⁶⁵

Recalling Homi Bhabha's assertion that 'the narrative and psychological force that nationness brings to bear on cultural production and political projection is the effect of the ambivalence of "nation" as narrative strategy', Nelson presents Biddle's text-as-production as a project(ion) of Indians-as-display that 'thematizes' national manhood, specifically by strategically editing the original Lewis and Clark journals into narratives of 'national achievement', of 'civilization borne into the wild' by white American men.⁶⁶ This thematization of national manhood is grounded in a scopophilic rhetoric that paradoxically performs white rational masculinity by placing Others on display. By continually displaying 'Indians' while allowing Lewis and Clark to resist 'the bodily captation involved in being put on display' themselves,⁶⁷ Biddle's *History* enacts a 'fantasy of masculinity' of 'non-self-conscious selfhood endowed with absolute control of a gaze whose directionality is irreversible', itself a narrative performance for Others.⁶⁸ In particular, "'Indianness" *qua* difference', especially ethnographic difference, is persistently reiterated and 'evaluated from the vantage of rational manhood': 'Indian appearance ("diminutive stature," "ill-shaped," "thick ankles"), Indian clothing ("the women are clad in a peculiar manner"), Indian behaviors (dancing, gambling, thieving), [are] always surveyed' and contrasted. More importantly, however, national masculinity is maintained by Indian 'systems of ignorance and superstition' that recall white rational superiority and lend a 'material advantage to national claims'.⁶⁹ The correlation between rational superiority and territorial claims for the nation is evinced by the Corps of Discovery's expedition onto an Indian burial mound:

[I]t was not till after four hours march that we reached the object of our visit. This was a large mound in the midst of the plain [. . .] [T]he Indians have made it a great article of

⁶⁵ Dana Nelson, *National Manhood: Capitalist Citizenship and the Imagined Fraternity of White Men* (London: Duke UP, 1998), pp. 62-67.

⁶⁶ Bhabha in Nelson, p. 78.

⁶⁷ Nelson, pp. 81-82.

⁶⁸ Lee Edelman in Nelson, p.p. 81-82.

⁶⁹ Nelson, pp. 81-83.

their superstition: it is called the mountain of Little People, or Little Spirits, and they believe that it is the abode of little devils, in the human form, of about eighteen inches high and with remarkably large heads; they are armed with sharp arrows, with which they are very skillful. . . . The tradition is, that many have suffered from these little spirits. . . . This has inspired all the neighboring nations, Sioux, Mahas, and Ottoes, with such terror, that no consideration could tempt them to visit the hill. We saw none of these wicked little spirits; nor any place for them, except some small holes scattered over the top: we were happy enough to escape their vengeance, though we remained some time on the mound to enjoy the delightful prospect of the plain.⁷⁰

Not only does the burial mound offer a ‘vantage [for] geographical survey’, but it confirms the ‘heroic rationality’ of the Corps of Discovery as representatives of the American nation. As Nelson explains, ‘the expedition literally and with symbolic import goes out of its way to stand on the bones of dead Indians in order to register its territorial sovereignty and rational superiority’. Biddle thereby confirms national claims by literally elevating American manhood over Indian bodies and identities.⁷¹

We can see how Lewis and Clark’s ascension over the burial mound recalls Thomas Jefferson’s exploration of the ‘Barrows’⁷² in the *Notes*, particularly in shared themes of ‘rational superiority’ over Indian bodies. Like Lewis and Clark, Jefferson approaches the mound rationally, employing empirical observation and methodology in his examination of the burial site, noting, ‘it [is] of a spheroidical form, of about 40 feet in diameter at the base, and had been of about twelve feet altitude, though now reduced by plough to seven and a half’; and, in order to ‘examine its internal structure’ he makes ‘a perpendicular cut through the body of the barrow’ that ‘pass[es] about three feet from its center, [is] opened to the former surface of the earth, and [is] wide enough for a man to walk through and examine its sides’.⁷³

Yet while Jefferson’s terminology conforms to an empirical system his vocabulary is also interesting for the corporeal imagery it calls forth: opening the ‘body’ of the barrow recalls Jefferson’s lament that ‘science had not yet performed such invasive procedures as would yield

⁷⁰ Biddle in Nelson, p. 83.

⁷¹ Nelson, p. 83.

⁷² Jefferson, *Notes*, p. 98.

⁷³ Jefferson, pp. 98-99.

definitive evidence for racial/ bodily difference'.⁷⁴ In a sense, the barrow is both a substitute and synecdoche for Indian interiority, and what Jefferson discovers inside confirms that Indian 'essence' is irrational and disordered, and wants the rational, civilizing tendencies naturally associated with 'whiteness':

I first dug superficially in several parts of it, and came to collections of human bones, at different depths, at six inches to three feet below the surface. These were lying in the utmost confusion, some vertical, some oblique, some horizontal, and directed to every point of the compass, entangled, and held together in clusters by the earth. Bones of the most distant parts were found together, as, for instance, the small bones of the foot in the hollow of the skull, many skulls would sometimes be in contact, lying on the face, on the side, on the back, top or bottom, so as, on the whole, to give the idea of bones emptied promiscuously from a bag or basket, and covered over with earth, without any attention to their order.⁷⁵

Of particular emphasis here is the Indians' 'utmost confusion': they lack mobilization toward a specific direction, their bodies are disarticulate and positioned 'promiscuously', connoting want of reasonable restraint, and they are without 'attention' 'to order'. Their 'confused position[s]' are only underscored by their tendency to further fragmentation: 'the skulls [are] so tender, that they generally [fall] to pieces on being touched' and the skeleton of an infant '[falls] to pieces on being taken out' of the sepulcher.⁷⁶ This lack of order inherent to Indian interiority positions the 'aborigines' outside of rational discourse in Jefferson's *Notes*, and becomes manifest in the fragmented aboriginal societies. Jefferson describes the Indians as possibly emerging from 'antiently [*sic*] three different [racial] stocks' which 'separated into so many little societies' because they 'never submitted themselves to any laws, any coercive power, any shadow of government'. Thus, while 'great societies cannot exist without government' the 'Savages therefore break them into small ones',⁷⁷ and 'fall to pieces' into groups of '10 or 12 men' or a

⁷⁴ Nelson, p. 66.

⁷⁵ Jefferson, p. 98.

⁷⁶ Jefferson, pp. 98-100.

⁷⁷ Jefferson, pp. 92-93.

‘few women’, which, like the barrows, ‘will probably disappear in time’.⁷⁸ In his analysis of the *Notes*, Malcolm Kelsall observes that for Jefferson, ‘the land had already been cleared and the aboriginals had melted away from the landscape (seemingly through some unexplained process apparently marked by the coming of the bees which are the sign of the approach of the agricultural settlements of the whites)’.⁷⁹ Positing Indian extinction as contingent on their own lack of rationality at once distances European-American involvement from aboriginal extinction and underscores America’s ‘material advantage to national claims’ based on rational superiority. For Jefferson, just as Lewis and Clark, ‘defining “Indians” provided an opportunity for scientifically validating whiteness *qua* civilization, pedagogically mapping it for the body politic while extending it politically across the continent’.⁸⁰ Projecting and positioning Indians as irrational justified national claims to the continent and cohered American identity at the cost of disarticulating Indian bodies.

While dismembered Anglo-American bodies demarcate anxious assertions to ownership of the soil, and Native American disarticulation affirms settler rights based on relative superiority, dismembered masculinities can also simultaneously indicate where assertions to the land fail as well as where they are confirmed. One such body is the ‘shattered’ figure of Colonel Richard M. Johnson. Vice-President of the United States from 1836-1840, he was also a veteran of the War of 1812, and was noted for presumably killing Chief Tecumseh in the Battle of the Thames in October, 1813.⁸¹ Johnson’s fight with Tecumseh, and his subsequent injuries, occurred when American troops led by General Harrison overtook the retreating British Army, who had secured themselves geographically with the Thames River flanking their left, and a swamp occupied by British-allied Indian forces on their right. Harrison ordered Johnson to charge the British. Johnson, however, divided his regiment into two battalions, sent his brother, James, and one battalion against the British, and attacked the embedded Indians himself, spearheading the charge with twenty volunteers called ‘The Forlorn Hope’.⁸² Although romanticizing events, ‘eye-witness’ Samuel R. Brown recounts:

⁷⁸ Jefferson, pp. 97-100.

⁷⁹ Kelsall, p. 96.

⁸⁰ Nelson, pp. 66-67.

⁸¹ William Whipple, ‘Poe’s Political Satire’, *Studies in English*, 35 (1956), 81-95 (p. 91).

⁸² *Ibid.*

The Colonel most gallantly led the head of his column into the hottest of the enemy's fire, and was personally opposed to Tecumseh. At this point a condensed mass of savages had collected. Yet, regardless of danger, he rushed into the midst of them – so thick were the indians [sic] at this moment that several might have touched him with their rifles. He rode a white horse and was known to be an officer of rank – a shower of balls was discharged at him – some took effect – his horse was shot under him – his clothes, his saddle, his person was pierced with bullets. At the moment his horse fell Tecumseh rushed towards him with an uplifted tomahawk, to give the fatal stroke, but his presence of mind did not forsake him in this perilous predicament – he drew a pistol from his holsters and laid his daring opponent dead at his feet. He was unable to do more, the loss of blood deprived him of strength to stand . . . he was wounded in five places; he received three shots in the right knee and two in the left arm.⁸³

After the American victory at the Thames, Richard Johnson's bullet-ridden body became both a source of patriotism and public curiosity. In 1814, *Niles' Weekly Register* gushed that although Johnson 'received several wounds in various parts of his body, it gives us great pleasure to state that his general health is perfectly re-established, and he has the happy prospect of entirely recovering his left arm and hand, which were much shattered'; and Richard Rush called Johnson 'a man upon crutches; his frame all mutilated; moving with difficulty yet an object of patriotic interest with everybody'.⁸⁴

Although the Battle of the Thames occurred in 1813, Poe would have been familiar with the historical narrative because it was recalled during Johnson's campaigns for Vice-Presidency in 1836 and re-election in 1840. Indeed, William Whipple contends that Poe's character, John A.B.C. Smith, is based on Johnson because of the 'obvious similarities: the swamp fight, the prodigies of valor, the shattered body'. Of singular note during Johnson's campaigns was the attention made of his wounds, often with Christ-like undertones suggestive of national martyrdom. After recalling Johnson's 'scarred and shattered frame and limping gate [sic]' in an 1835 eulogy, Mr. Holt, a Kentucky representative, said Johnson 'poured out his blood like water'

⁸³ Whipple, p. 92.

⁸⁴ Whipple, p. 92.

in his battle against the ‘savage myrmydons’; and the May 25, 1835 edition of the *Washington Daily Globe* claimed that Johnson’s wounds ‘began to bleed afresh’.⁸⁵

Public fascination with Johnson’s ‘shattered frame’ was also exploited in the Indian drama, *Tecumseh*, with a final scene of implied apotheosis: injured with ‘death wounds [that will] not bring death’, Johnson lies on the stage as several characters cheer his victory and ‘The Goddess of Liberty descends from the clouds in a car’.⁸⁶ Written by Richard Emmons to promote Johnson’s vice-presidential bid, in its day, *Tecumseh* met with mixed reviews.⁸⁷ With language that predicts John A.B.C Smith’s ‘lower limbs’ described as ‘*ne plus ultra* of good legs’,⁸⁸ the February 1, 1834 edition of *Niles Register* refers to *Tecumseh*’s attempts at historical authenticity as ‘*ne plus ultra* of the ridiculous’, and continues, ‘If it is the intention of Col. Johnson’s friends to name him for vice-presidency, they ought promptly to forbid or suppress these bombastic proceedings if they can’. Johnson, for his part, enjoyed the play, and in a letter to his friend Thomas Henderson said ‘a very crowded Audience huzzah[ed] etc to the death of Tecumseh etc. I have *more* friends than ever by hundred’.⁸⁹

While Emmons’s *Tecumseh* is mostly forgotten today, it is still useful toward an analysis of Poe’s work. Indeed, to some degree Poe’s American-based satire, ‘The Man That Was Used Up’, addresses productions like *Tecumseh*, not least of all because they exemplify the ‘literary nationalism’ that Poe disdains when he notes, ‘our reviews urged the propriety’ ‘of strictly “American” themes’ and ‘we found ourselves daily in the paradoxical dilemma of liking, or pretending to like, a stupid book the better because (sure enough) its stupidity was of our own growth, and discussed our own affairs’.⁹⁰ More importantly, tales such as ‘The Man That Was Used Up’ parallel Emmons’s vision of Indian warfare, ‘used up’ identity, and the American struggle for land, even while Emmons mobilizes these tropes for nationalistic ends and Poe critiques them to question the construction of national subjectivity.

Of prominence in both authors’ texts is the trope of being ‘used up’, associated with dismemberment by Poe, and correlated with being devoured in *Tecumseh*. Imagery of ‘using up’

⁸⁵ Whipple, pp. 92-93, *Daily Globe* in Meyer, p. 424.

⁸⁶ Richard Emmons, *Tecumseh; or, the Battle of the Thames, A National Drama in Five Acts*, (Philadelphia: 1836), 5. 6.

⁸⁷ Meyer, p. 401.

⁸⁸ Edgar Allan Poe, ‘The Man’, p. 406.

⁸⁹ Meyer, p. 402.

⁹⁰ Edgar Allan Poe, ‘Literary Nationalism (from “Exordium to Critical Notices”)', *The Portable Edgar Allan Poe*, ed. by J. Gerald Kennedy (London: Penguin, 2006), pp. 577-578 (pp. 577, 577-578).

or devouring is mentioned throughout Emmons's drama, most often as a threat used by the Americans and Indians, and, significantly, not by the British: the Kentucky soldiers, who call themselves 'alligator horses', boast they'll 'make a snack' of English General Proctor, and 'use him up, bones and all'; while Tecumseh wants to 'swallow up [his] enemies', orders his soldiers, 'Glut thy wrath', and threatens to 'consume' Kentucky.⁹¹ The British, in contrast, are positioned more subserviently in the eat-or-be-eaten land struggle of *Tecumseh* in that they always *display* anxiety at being consumed: Proctor fears the Americans will 'barbacue' [*sic*] the British and 'feast upon [their] scorching quivering limbs!', while the British villager, Cloutier, believes Kentuckians 'think no more of eating a child than a pig', and comforts his son with the words, 'You are safe in your daddy's arms. They shall eat me first. How that big fellow snapped his teeth at thee!'.⁹²

On one level, British anxiety over being 'used up' reflects an over-arching ideology that juxtaposes American manliness against a British lack of integrity. While Americans talk about 'test[ing] the temper of [their] steel[s]' and 'bar[ing] their bosom[s] to repel the enemies of [their] country' for the 'twentieth time', the British Colonel Chambers calls his sword 'useless', and worries about being 'unman[ned]'.⁹³ This lack of manliness is also displayed by Proctor, who cries "'Alas! We are undone!" I must away' when he hears of Johnson's attack; 'grasps the hilt of his sword, and occasionally draws it partly from his scabbard' when addressed by Tecumseh; and offers the Indian chief 'a military sash and epaulettes' in appeasement.⁹⁴ Also, after bartering with Indians about the price of scalps, Proctor touches his own head and says "'Tis safe; I feel it safe'.⁹⁵ His anxiety is mirrored by Jerry, his aide, who yells, 'I've lost my scalp! 'tis gone', then 'feel[s] his head with his hand' and states, 'Oh! it's – Yes, it's all right'.⁹⁶

Yet while the British tendency to 'come undone' in *Tecumseh* affirms an 'unmanliness' it also recalls an epistemological condition that correlates coherent subjectivities with the ability to bond with the American soil, an ability historically denied to the British for having been expelled from America after the Revolutionary War. In short, their 'devourability' stems from their inability to claim American soil as their paternal ground: just as the Indians in Jefferson's *Notes*

⁹¹ *Tecumseh*, 3. 1. 101, 3. 1. 353-354, 4. 3. 71, 5. 2. 15, 4. 3. 68.

⁹² *Tecumseh*, 4. 3. 9-10, 3. 1. 262-263, 5. 5. 10-12.

⁹³ *Tecumseh*, 4. 1. 114-115, 4. 1. 125-126, 1. 2. 71, 4. 3. 108.

⁹⁴ *Tecumseh*, 4. 3, *ibid.*

⁹⁵ *Tecumseh*, 2. 1. 43-44.

⁹⁶ *Tecumseh*, 2. 1. 1, 2. 3. 57-58.

‘deny a dead enemy sepulcher in their land’, prohibiting their bonding with the soil, Tecumseh tells Proctor, ‘the fowls of heaven shall eat thee’, implying that he will be ‘used up’ and made to disappear from the country.⁹⁷ However, this disjuncture between the English and the land as depicted by Emmons also stands in for a specific event in American history. In his encounter with the Kentucky soldiers Cloutier mentions the dichotomy between being buried and ‘used up’, saying, ‘I feel more satisfied to have my son buried than to be eaten by these Kentuckians’, then recalls ‘Proctor the Great – the hero of Raisin!’ before a Kentuckian is restrained from assaulting him.⁹⁸ By mentioning the Raisin River, Cloutier recollects an event from the War of 1812 when five hundred American troops defeated British forces in Frenchtown, Michigan, without casualties, but, after failing to fortify their camp, were captured and killed by Indian forces. Even prisoners who Proctor promised to protect ‘were victims of the most grewsome [*sic*] savagery’.⁹⁹ In association with this reference to the Raisin is the aftermath, when American troops were disinterred from their burial grounds, as noted by McAfee above, thereby bringing into relief a site where American identification with the land was disrupted by America’s aboriginal inhabitants.

Reference to the disinterred American dead recurs when Tecumseh halts Indian troops from scalping a fallen American soldier, saying, ‘Shame! Let dead men sleep in death’.¹⁰⁰ Here, the noble Indian’s affirmation of America’s right to bond with the New World discursively surmounts an historical event where this right was destabilized; and this affirmation is underscored by its chronological placement in Emmons’s drama: Tecumseh verifies America’s sense of geographical bonding, falls in battle moments later, then utters last words reminiscent of Chief Logan’s speech: ‘The Red Man’s course is run; I die – the last of all my race’.¹⁰¹ In short, he acknowledges American entitlement to the land, then dies, along with the rest of his ‘race’, making way for the rightful inheritors to the land. Assuring the completion of America’s displacement of the Indian are the ghosts of the ‘Red Men’ who, unlike the fallen American, cannot ‘sleep in death’. As Tecumseh’s brother, Prophet, states, ‘Let the Pale-face die – the Red-man live [. . .] Wander no more ye ghosts, wrapped up in folds of darkness’, and ‘vengeance,

⁹⁷ *Tecumseh*, 4. 3. 90-91.

⁹⁸ *Tecumseh*, 3. 1. 313-314, 3. 1. 321, 3. 1. 322-323.

⁹⁹ Meyer, p. 103.

¹⁰⁰ *Tecumseh*, 5. 5. 4-5.

¹⁰¹ *Tecumseh*, 5. 6. 11-12.

come forth; appease thy troubled ghosts, and avenge the red man's fall!'.¹⁰² These sentiments are reiterated by Tecumseh, who 'hears the spirits shriek – Revenge!' and orders his troops to raise their voices 'on high, and, to the shrieking ghosts hold converse'.¹⁰³ The Indians 'wander' after death as spirits and ghosts, because they are disconnected from the land due to the arrival of the 'Pale-faces'.

In *Tecumseh*, the Americans' ultimate triumph of the War of 1812, then, is not against the British, but the Indians, who represent America's real obstacle to claiming their part of the New World and the generating national subjects. The correlation between Indians and the American inability to regenerate is made clear when the Indian, Maypock, offers Proctor scalps from 'infants' and tells Prophet about the 'bride and bridegroom' and 'baby' he murdered.¹⁰⁴ The British, in contrast, are never drawn as a threat. Their removal from the country is constantly alluded to by their tendency to be 'used up'. In a sense, the British represent what Americans would be without land, and in this regard embody projections of American anxieties. By 'coming undone' at points of colonial contact, as Proctor repeatedly does (mostly in regard to character, but with symbolic corporeal disarticulation as well), the British embody America's own fears of a destabilized identity caused by a disrupted relationship with the land. Serving as a foil to Proctor is Johnson, who maintains his masculine identity as the 'foremost of Kentucky's sons' even though wounded by Tecumseh.¹⁰⁵ In part, Johnson's integrity is grounded in the fact that he is the Indians' natural successor and therefore has a manly 'purity' which 'comes from [his] proximity to [his] own land and "the face of the earth"'. This succession, or displacement, of the Indian is suggested in the similarity of wounds shared by Johnson and Prophet's ghosts. While Prophet envisions Indian ghosts 'opening their wounds, steaming hot blood', Johnson says 'I faint – my blood' before 'sink[ing] upon the stage'.¹⁰⁶ As a successor to the Indians' ownership of the land, as well as a reference to the River Raisin Massacre, Johnson's wounded body has two contrary and simultaneous meanings: first, it recalls a site where American proximity to the land is questionable; but, secondly, the fact that Johnson retains his masculine integrity despite his wounded frame necessarily points to his naturalized bond with the land, so his wounds also confirm and celebrate national claims to the continent. In

¹⁰² *Tecumseh*, 2. 4. 51-54, 5. 2. 8-10.

¹⁰³ *Tecumseh*, 5. 5. 8, 5. 3. 18-19.

¹⁰⁴ *Tecumseh*, 2. 1. 7, 2. 4. 23-26.

¹⁰⁵ *Tecumseh*, 5. 6. 31.

¹⁰⁶ *Tecumseh*, 2. 4. 44-45, 5. 6. 5.

this regard, Johnson's broken self recalls the paradoxical reasoning in Locke's 'Property' that Horwitz outlines: 'self owns property because it owns itself; at the same time, the self owns itself only because realized by and invested in property'. Similarly, Johnson is wounded and incomplete because his claim to the land is contested; at the same time his masculine self is stable despite his wounds because it is 'realized by and invested in [the] property' of the New World.

Just as Johnson's relationship to the land is paradoxical and cannot be resolved, his corresponding open wound cannot be healed, as indicated in the final scene of Emmons's drama. Here, Johnson's martyrdom enables American regeneration, as suggested by the subplot of Lucinda and Edward, two separated lovers reunited at the play's end after recognizing Johnson as their 'deliverer'.¹⁰⁷ Yet although Johnson counters Maypock's murderous actions, Johnson himself remains undisturbed on the ground, the characters waving the American flag over his bleeding body.¹⁰⁸ The curtain falls without any closure of his wounds. To the contrary, his wounds will remain open and 'bleed afresh' during his bid for vice-presidency; and as a trope, the image of the open wound will recur in contemporary depictions of white-Indian struggles over land such as the Second Seminole War (1835-42). Compare, for example, Johnson's injuries with those sustained by Ransom Clarke during the Dade Ambush:

Clarke received his first wound in the thigh, about 1 o'clock, outside the breast work, which brought him to the ground. He soon recovered himself, and crawled and limped in. He placed himself along it and commenced firing in that position, but in the act of elevating the musket, received a wound between the elbow and right shoulder. He still continued to fire and load, but again received two wounds, one in the head from buck shot, and a small rifle ball in the back. He still kept on till about 4 o'clock, when he received a ball on the right scapula from a negro; who, when he fired, cried out, "There damn you." This disabled him, and he fell on his face, and continued motionless.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁷ *Tecumseh*, 5. 6. 18.

¹⁰⁸ *Tecumseh*, 5. 6.

¹⁰⁹ 'The Last of Major Dade's Command', in *The Greenwood Library of American War Reporting: The Indian Wars and the Spanish-American War*, ed. by John M. Coward and W. Joseph Campbell, 8 vols (London: Greenwood Press, 2005), IV, 35-37 (p. 36).

The article relating to Clarke's injuries is subjoined in the August 20th, 1836 edition of *Niles' National Register* with an 'official document' from Washington which discloses that 'Clarke received five wounds in battle' and 'the wound in his shoulder is yet open, and an exfoliation [sic] of the bones occur[s] almost daily'.¹¹⁰ By referring to Ransom Clarke I wish to outline a particular trope which Poe would have been familiar with and which would structure the images of disarticulate masculinity in his own corpus. On a narrative level, Clarke's wounds are similar to Johnson's because they are 'death wounds that will not bring death' and continue to 'bleed afresh'. Further, just as Johnson's shattered frame is an object of 'patriotic interest', Clarke's narrative is linked with a national struggle, presented with 'a view of showing what men suffer in defense of their country' and displaying 'the condition he has been reduced in that country's service'.¹¹¹ Like Johnson, Clarke embodies an ambivalent state for the American self; namely, the anxious condition of being at once a national subject and not a national subject, of being founded on paradoxical grounds.

In bringing to a close discussion about the link between property and the foundation of the civic self as a context for Poe's fiction it is important to acknowledge that this link became less vital in defining subjectivity over the course of America's transformation from a Jeffersonian rural republic to a Jacksonian nation characterized by industrialization and economic booms. While Enlightened tenets remained pervasive into the 1830s, they were challenged by Jacksonian democracy and the concurrent social changes. Specifically, ownership of private property, and the financial independence it facilitated, was de-emphasized as essential for full democratic citizenship as states steadily eliminated voting restrictions from the 1790s to the 1820s; and by 1828 many white males over the age of twenty-one enjoyed voting privileges regardless of property ownership.¹¹² As well, due to the increase in manufacturing establishments promoted by the Embargo of 1807, and made necessary by the British blockades during the War of 1812, Jefferson's utopian ideal of a 'nation of husbandmen' had begun to disappear before he was even retired from the presidency.

However, the notion of a fundamental connection between property – particularly land – and identity still persisted. Alexander Hamilton, one of the Founding Fathers, wrote the political philosophy underpinning early America's new industrialism. Hamilton was convinced that

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹¹² Robert V. Remini, *The Revolutionary Age of Andrew Jackson* (London: Harper & Row, 1976), p. 35.

social stability was contingent on a firm alliance between government and business, and stated that no society could succeed ‘which did not unite the interest and credit of rich individuals with those of the state’.¹¹³ Behind this premise was a deep-seated conviction that society would be governed best by an aristocracy based properly and enduringly on property. Congressman Daniel Webster of Massachusetts supported Hamilton’s argument when he declared that ‘power *naturally* and *necessarily* follows property’ and that

a republican form of government rests not more on political constitutions than on those laws which regulate the descent and transmission of property [. . .] It would seem, then, to be the part of political wisdom to found government on property; and to establish such distribution of property, by the laws which regulate its transmission and alienation, as to interest the great majority of society in the protection of the government.¹¹⁴

Webster’s sentiment was echoed by Benjamin Watkins Leigh of Virginia, who asserted that ‘power and property may be separated for a time by force or fraud – but divorced, never. For, so soon as the pang of separation is felt, . . . property will purchase power, or power will take over property’. In short, neo-Federalists such as Hamilton, Webster and Leigh subscribed to an ideology that linked power and property together, and sought to retain their political and economic ascendancy by restricting the governmental franchise with property qualifications that prevented the flight of political power from propertied men.¹¹⁵

This correlation between property and power further extended to one between the amount of property owned and the degree of political influence held. As one Chancellor Kent stated at an 1821 New York convention, ‘society is an association for the protection of property as well as of life, and the individual who contributes only one cent to the common stock, ought not to have the same power and influence in directing the property concerns of the partnership, as he who contributes his thousands’; and Jeremiah Mason repeated a similar ideal: ‘as the wealth of the commercial and manufacturing classes increases, in the same degree ought their political power to increase. . . . I know this aristocracy of wealth is apt to be evil spoken of. But in a country

¹¹³ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁴ Arthur M. Schlesinger, *The Age of Jackson* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1953) p. 12-13.

¹¹⁵ Schlesinger, p. 13.

where wealth greatly abounds, I doubt whether any other foundation for a stable government can be found'.¹¹⁶

It was the emphatic link between political agency and land which Jacksonian Democrats, such as Martin Van Buren, argued against when they expounded Universal Suffrage and urged ownership of personal property, instead of exclusive territory, as a qualification for voting rights. At an 1821 New York convention to modify the state constitution, Van Buren aligned the Federalists with the aristocratic corruption of Britain by noting their precedence of property over natural rights of suffrage:

What, sir, said he, was the cause of the corruptions which confessedly prevail in that portion of the representation in the parliament of Great Britain? Was it the lowness of the qualification of the electors, in comparison with the residue of the country? No. . . . I will tell you, sir, said Mr. V. B. what is the cause – it is because the representation in question, is a representation of things, and not of men – it is because that it is attached to territory, to a village or town, without regard to the population; as by the amendment under consideration, it is attempted here to be attached to territory, and to territory only. . . .¹¹⁷

In contradistinction, anti-Jacksonianists such as Philip N. Nicholas argued that 'personal property is fluctuating – it is frequently invisible, as well as intangible – it can be removed, and can be enjoyed as well in one society as another. What evidence of permanent interest and attachment [to America], is afforded by the ownership of horses, cattle, or slaves?'.¹¹⁸ 'Lasting ownership of the soil of the country', on the other hand, is 'durable' and 'indestructible', 'and the man who acquires, or is proprietor of it' is one of the 'chosen people of God', and 'connects his fate by the strongest of all ties, with the destiny of the country'.¹¹⁹ For Nicholas, such arguments for permanent interest reflect not only the American Bill of Rights, which states 'that all men having sufficient evidence of permanent, common interest with, and attachment to, the community, have the Right of Suffrage', but the larger Enlightened epistemologies that inform it,

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁷ Martin Van Buren, 'Martin Van Buren Addresses the New York Convention', in *Jacksonian America 1815-1840: New Society, Changing Politics*, Frank Otto Gatell and John M. McFaul, eds., (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1970), pp. 86-90 (p.90).

¹¹⁸ Philip N. Nicholas, 'Philip N. Nicholas Addresses the Virginia Convention', in Gatell and McFaul, pp. 90-94 (p. 92).

¹¹⁹ Nicholas, pp. 91-92.

particularly the social contract. He argues that ‘suffrage is a conventional, and not a natural right. In a state of nature, (if such a state ever existed except in the imagination of the poets,) every man acts for himself and is the sole judge of what will contribute to his happiness’. But when the same man ‘enters into the social state [. . .] to guard himself against violence, and to protect him in the enjoyment of the fruits of his industry’ he must surrender a portion of his natural rights to governmental powers in order to ‘secure to him such portion of those rights he retains’, or other rights that emerge from his new social position.¹²⁰ This contractual basis of society foregrounds how Representation and Suffrage are strictly social institutions as opposed to ‘natural’ rights. The Bill of Rights recognizes this distinction and the manner in which natural rights are modified upon entrance into the social state.

This link between self and property pertained not only to rights to full citizenship, but character as well. In 1834 Peter Oxenbridge Thacher, a Bostonian judge, explained the ‘diversity of poverty and riches’ as an ‘order of Providence’: ‘Why are not all the flowers of the field equally beautiful and fragrant? Why are not all the fruits of the earth equally rich and wholesome? And why [. . .] towers the oak in grandeur to heaven, while the shrub at its base is trodden under feet? Will vain regrets, and still vainer discontent change the course of nature?’ The implication that ‘grandeur’ is attributed to the wealthy, and ‘base[ness]’ to the poor is stated more explicitly in the December 1832 edition of the *American Quarterly Review*: ‘the lowest orders of society ordinarily mean the poorest – and the highest, the richest [. . . .] Sensual excess, want of intelligence, and moral debasement distinguished the former – knowledge, intellectual superiority, and refined, social, and domestic affections, the latter’.¹²¹ Such sentiments, as well as Nicholas’s 1831 argument during the Virginian convention to modify the state constitution, suggest that while Universal Suffrage inexorably passed to the propertyless classes, thereby altering the definition of American citizenship, vestiges of the Enlightenment link between self and land still pervaded the popular mind in the Jacksonian era.¹²² Vis-à-vis the historical and cultural context of Poe’s corpus, we see how property was interconnected with identity, and how the anxious possibilities of disrupting the ‘inalienable self’ through the alienation of land become manifested as broken masculine bodies in the contemporary popular media.

¹²⁰ Nicholas, pp. 91-92.

¹²¹ Schlesinger, p. 14.

¹²² *Ibid.*

Edgar Allan Poe in Jacksonian America

How does Poe figure into this historical context of Native Americans, property and the self? On the surface it seems that colonial issues about Indian Removal are peripheral to his concerns. Indeed, as D.H. Lawrence asserts, 'Poe has no truck with Indians or Nature. He makes no bones about Red Brothers and Wigwams'.¹²³ It would be easy to agree with Lawrence's argument: only three of Poe's works explicitly deal with Native Americans as a theme, and one of these, *The Journal of Julius Rodman*, was left unfinished. Two other works, 'The Philosophy of Furniture' and 'The Business Man', mention Native Americans in passing: the former essay-story oddly notes that the 'Kickapoos are very well in their way' regarding 'internal decoration', and that a carpet 'should *not* be bedizened out like a Riccaree Indian – all red chalk, yellow ochre and cock's feathers', while the 'business man' of the latter tale implements the scheme of the 'Eye-Sore trade' by building a 'mud hovel' or 'pig-sty' of 'either Esquimau, Kickapoo, or Hottentot' style near the site of a new mansion and then demanding payment to have it removed.¹²⁴ Yet even while the 'Red Brothers' are mostly absent from Poe's fiction, they maintain an organizing absence, providing the structuring economy for Poe's ideas about property and ownership.

The reason why Native Americans play a vital role in Poe's perceptions of property can be explained by assessing how Poe considered himself and his literary endeavours within Jacksonian America. Michael Kimmel and David Leverenz both outline three typologies of early American masculinity which, although never fully existent in reality, are useful for studying the class basis for gender codes and understanding how Poe related property to the self.¹²⁵ The first ideology of manhood, and the one characteristic the era, was the new middle class, or 'self-made men', who dominated early American definitions of manhood.¹²⁶ These 'new men' derived their identities from the public sphere, based their worth on work and

¹²³ D.H. Lawrence, 'Edgar Allan Poe', in *The Recognition of Edgar Allan Poe: Selected Criticism Since 1829*, ed. by Eric W. Carlson, (Ann Arbor: Michigan UP, 1966), pp. 110-126 (p. 110).

¹²⁴ Edgar Allan Poe, 'The Philosophy of Furniture', in *The Complete Tales and Poems of Edgar Allan Poe* (New York: Vintage, 1976), pp. 462-470 (pp. 462-463), Edgar Allan Poe, 'The Business Man', in *The Complete Tales and Poems of Edgar Allan Poe* (New York: Vintage, 1976), pp. 413-420 (p. 416).

¹²⁵ David Leverenz, *Manhood and the American Renaissance* (London: Cornell UP, 1989), pp. 73-74.

¹²⁶ Michael Kimmel, *Manhood in America: A Cultural History* (New York: The Free Press, 1996) p. 17.

entrepreneurial competition, and affirmed their values through accumulated wealth, status, and geographical and social mobility.¹²⁷ The second typology of masculinity refers to a much larger producing class of artisanal workers that defined manhood through freedom, pride of craft, and citizenship, and believed that independent men of relatively small means were both entitled to full citizenship and best equipped to exercise it.¹²⁸ The last of the typologies, the patrician paradigm, describes a colonial elite comprised of merchants, lawyers, politicians and landed gentry who expressed masculinity through property ownership, patriarchy, and republican ideals of citizenship.¹²⁹ The patrician typology was also an ideal inherited from Europe, and looked to England for cultural prescriptions of behaviour.¹³⁰ At their best, the patrician types, or Genteel Patriarchs, as termed by Kimmel, were dignified aristocrats committed to upper-class codes of honour, with exquisite tastes and manners and refined sensibilities. Those defined by this typology exhibited the ideals of a Christian gentleman, embodying love, kindness, duty, and compassion through philanthropic work, and a deep involvement with family. Many of the Founding Fathers, such as Thomas Jefferson, George Washington, and James Madison exemplified Genteel Patriarchy.¹³¹ The Genteel Patriarchs also believed in their right to lead their country by virtue of their title, and in this regard they were aligned by Kant's exclusive qualifications for citizenship pertaining to relative superiority and independence as contingent on property ownership.¹³² We can see some of the beliefs of the Genteel Patriarchs spelled out by James Madison in the *Federalist Papers*, when he states, the 'most common and durable source of factions has been the various and unequal distribution of property. Those who hold and those who are without property have ever formed distinct interests in society'.¹³³ As Madison explains, social divisions occur because all men are created *unequal*, with some better at securing property than others.¹³⁴ Put differently, 'the diversity in the faculties of men from which the rights of property originate' makes the dream of a 'uniformity of interests' 'impractical'. The 'first form of government' is to protect these diverse, and from 'the protection of different and

¹²⁷ Wood in Leverenz, p. 77, Kimmel, pp. 22-23, Leverenz, p. 74.

¹²⁸ Leverenz, p. 74, Kimmel, p. 30.

¹²⁹ Leverenz, p. 74.

¹³⁰ Kimmel, p. 18.

¹³¹ Kimmel, p. 16.

¹³² Kimmel, p. 18.

¹³³ Madison in Leverenz, p. 80.

¹³⁴ Leverenz, p. 80.

unequal faculties of acquiring property, the possession of different degrees and kinds of property immediately results'.¹³⁵

Embedded within America's class differences, Poe placed himself within the patrician paradigm, subscribing to notions of entitlement and assumptions of an inherent superior ability to create property. Simultaneously, he was caught up in contemporary market expectations that emphasized 'self- and money-making'.¹³⁶ As Leland S. Person explains, Poe was impelled by both these paradigms of manhood, and worked to establish 'an alternative model of gentility through the medium of his writing', to make 'textuality itself the source of true aristocracy'.¹³⁷ His solution for creating both a self and living through writing in a society that defined masculinity in economic terms was to found a literary journal, to capitalize writing.¹³⁸ This link between property, manhood and writing is evinced in Poe's letter to Frederick Thomas: 'Literature is the most noble of professions. In fact, it is about the only one fit for a man. For my own part, there is no seducing me from the path. I shall be a litterateur, at least, all my life; nor would I abandon the hope which still leads me on for all the gold in California'.¹³⁹ However, of particular note in Poe's statement is not only that he defines the literary profession as the 'only one fit for a man', but that he locates value outside of material gain, and even outside of textuality.¹⁴⁰ In the same letter, Poe continues,

[Did] it ever strike you that all which is really valuable to a man of letters – to a poet in especial – is absolutely unpurchaseable? Love, fame, the dominion of the intellect, the consciousness of power, the thrilling sense of beauty, the free air of Heaven, exercise of body & mind, with the physical and moral health which result – these and such as these are really all that a poet cares for.¹⁴¹

¹³⁵ Madison in Leverenz, p. 80.

¹³⁶ Leland S. Person, 'Poe and Nineteenth-Century Gender Constructions', in *A Historical Guide to Edgar Allan Poe*, ed. by J. Gerald Kennedy (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2001), pp. 129-165 (p. 130). Person notes that Poe was positioned 'squarely between genteel and self-made models of manhood'.

¹³⁷ Person, p. 130, Leverenz in Person, p. 153.

¹³⁸ Person, p. 154.

¹³⁹ Poe in Person, p. 159.

¹⁴⁰ Person, p. 159.

¹⁴¹ Poe in Person, p. 160.

For Poe, it is not necessarily the material production of ‘letters’ that makes the man. Rather, value is found in what is abstract and ‘unpurchaseable’: ‘love’, ‘the intellect’, ‘beauty’, ‘the free air of Heaven’, ‘moral health’ – such nonmaterial things give the ‘poet’ his worth. While such flowery language may be seen as nothing more than sentimentality, it actually signals what is very important and intrinsic to Poe’s fiction; specifically, the ‘unpurchaseable’ abstractions Poe mentions reflect a Neoplatonism grounded in Platonic epistemology and Christian soteriology. When read against this Neoplatonism, Poe’s letter points out exactly what he considers as having ultimate value: that is, the human soul immortalized through the theological concept of the Holy Spirit, and which comprehends Platonic Ideality through Eros and love. For Poe, such a soul is essential for the creation of true property, and enables one to become a ‘true man’ analogous to the True Man, Christ.

This Neoplatonism can be made to corroborate the values of the patrician paradigm, with the artistic, Christian soul being the inherency that gives the artist his unequal-because-superior ‘dominion of intellect’ that enables him to create property. Poe’s ‘elevated’ intellect, which reflects his elevated soul, is one of the diverse ‘faculties of men from which the rights of property originate’, and a ‘different and unequal’ faculty ‘of acquiring property’ from which ‘different degrees and kinds of property’ immediately result. This is not to argue that Poe had no worldly concerns, or that he was ‘a dreamer – dwelling in ideal realms’.¹⁴² True to his class, Poe valued land as the proper prerequisite for citizenship and political involvement, disdaining the social shift towards universal suffrage based on personal property. This disdain is expressed in *Marginalia*, when Poe states that the ‘nose of the mob is its imagination. By this, at any time, it can be quietly led’; and, at the risk of conflating Poe’s voice with his narrators’, his condescension from his position of genteel patriarch is suggested in ‘Mellonta Tauta’, when the narrator explains how early nineteenth-century America ‘started with the queerest idea conceivable, viz: that all men are born free and equal – this, in the very teeth of the laws of *gradation* so visibly impressed upon all things both in the moral and physical universe’, and when the same narrator observes that every ‘man “voted,” as they called it – that is to say, meddled with public affairs – until, at length, it was discovered that what is everybody’s business is nobody’s, and that the “Republic” (so the absurd thing was called) was without a government

¹⁴² Rufus Wilmot Griswold, ‘The “Ludwig” Article’, in *The Recognition of Edgar Allan Poe: Selected Criticism Since 1829*, ed. by Eric W. Carlson, (Ann Arbor: Michigan UP, 1966), pp. 28-35 (p.32).

at all'.¹⁴³ Poe conflated the values of the patrician paradigm with his own Neoplatonic ideas, particularly privileging land ownership in his aesthetic theories. For Poe, the highest ideal of personhood, or manhood, is the commingling of spiritual property with land. Such a union between the soul and the earth through an artistic labour lends the artist perfectibility, as described in greater detail in Chapter Three.

In order for the artist to achieve this perfectibility two aspects are required: the elevated soul and an incontestable ownership of the land. In Poe's fiction, these two principles are embodied by women and Native Americans, groups of people who, along with African-Americans, were barred from property ownership in Jacksonian America, and, on a more ideological level, were precluded from the universal, Enlightened precepts that influenced early American politics.¹⁴⁴ In *Commentaries on the Laws of England* William Blackstone puts forth a definition of marital union that involved a conflation of identities and established a legal plight for married women that lasted well into the nineteenth century in Anglo-American culture: 'By marriage, the husband and wife are one person in law: that is, the very being or legal existence of the woman is suspended during the marriage, or at least is incorporated and consolidated into that of the husband'.¹⁴⁵ With her new 'suspended' status the wife becomes a *femme-covert*, a 'hidden', 'protected', or 'covered' woman; and under this principle, 'of an union of person in husband and wife, depend almost all the legal rights, duties, and disabilities, that either of them acquire by marriage'; for example, 'a man cannot grant anything to his wife, or enter into covenant with her' because the 'union of person' means that to 'covenant with her would be only to covenant with himself'.¹⁴⁶ This legal conflation of identities, which relegates women as aspects of male identities, is theologically enacted in Poe's corpus. That is, Poe writes women as reflections of the male soul. As detailed in Chapter Two, the occlusion of female identity by the male reflection is appurtenant of a larger Neoplatonic matrix. While the second Chapter focuses on Poe's literary philosophies, what also emerges is the way Poe hinges much of his aesthetic thought around idealized women. For this reason, even though the focus of this thesis is on

¹⁴³ Edgar Allan Poe, *Marginalia*, in *The Works of Edgar Allan Poe*, ed. by John H. Ingram, in 4 vols (Edinburgh: Adam and Charles Black, 1875), pp. 347-479 (p. 409), Edgar Allan Poe, 'Mellonta Tauta', in *The Complete Tales and Poems of Edgar Allan Poe* (New York: Vintage, 1976), pp. 384-394 (p. 390).

¹⁴⁴ Ferguson, pp. 150-155.

¹⁴⁵ Ferguson, p. 160, St. George Tucker, *Blackstone's Commentaries: With Notes of Reference, to The Constitution and Laws, of the Federal Government of the United States; and of the Commonwealth of Virginia*, 5 vols (Philadelphia: William Young Birch, and Abraham Small, 1803), I, p. 441.

¹⁴⁶ Ferguson, p. 160, Tucker, pp. 441, 442.

Poe's depictions of male disarticulation vis-à-vis colonial contexts, it is necessary to discuss Poe's depictions of women, because they are key to understanding not only his theories, but how he constructs male identity in a more general sense.

Gaining insight into Poe's literary principles, and understanding the logic that asserts women instantiate male essence, requires an assessment of both the Platonic and Judeo-Christian ideas that structure Poe's theoretical essays, particularly 'The Poetic Principle' and 'The Philosophy of Composition'. Platonic considerations include the ontology limned in the *Timaeus* about a perfectly ordered universe built according to the plan of a Creator, with the material world reflecting an Ideal counterpart. More significantly, discussion of Platonic epistemology also encompasses ideas put forth in the *Symposium*, especially the concept of the 'ladder of erotics', in which a lover leads a beloved through various fields of study and definitions of love until they arrive at Beauty, the Ideal truth that brings one close to the Creator and enables immortality. These Platonic ideas are transposed into a Judeo-Christian frame, where Eros, or love, is written as an aspect of a Holy Spirit that also unifies one with God and immortalizes the mortal soul. With the syncretisation of Platonism and Judeo-Christianity, women, particularly in a marital context, embody the lover who leads one to Beauty and immortality; at the same time, their love elevates their husbands' souls as an aspect of the Holy Spirit. Chapter Two explores this Neoplatonic dynamic within the larger subject of Poe's artistic theory, and extrapolates on Poe's writings of women, using examples from literary critics who influenced his writing, such as Augustus Schlegel and H.N. Coleridge, and his own short story, 'Berenice'. Exploring these aspects of Poe's philosophy provides an interpretive apparatus to examine male dismemberment in Poe's writing.

While the elevated soul in Poe's writing is facilitated by an identificatory collapse of women into male selves, another ego incorporation enables a naturalized claim to the national soil; specifically, the incorporation of the Native into the European-American self. Chapter Three bridges the methodologies put forward in Chapter Two with Poe's ideas about land and land ownership, through examination of the short story, 'The Oblong Box', through an in-depth assessment of the national 'root' as outlined by Schlegel, and through mobilization of Poe's and Schlegel's theories to interpret how Poe defines the perfect artist, or 'true man', as owning both property and an elevated spirit in 'The Domain of Arnheim'. Chapter Four will examine Poe's perception of Native Americans by looking at 'The Mask of the Red Death', a lesser-known tale

called ‘Morning on the Wissahiccon’, and excerpts from his literary criticism. Simultaneous acts of relegation and displacement define Poe’s construction of Native Americans. On one hand, Poe annuls Native Americans’ claims to the land based on their ‘inherent’ deficiency of a properly elevated soul that can be invested into nature, and that can feel and express national Ideality. This aboriginal lack of divinity is tied to a lack of rationality in accordance with Neoplatonic discourses as well as a Lockean epistemology that equates spirit, consciousness and personhood.¹⁴⁷ On the other, even though Poe extols the poet for having the properly attuned soul that can ‘feel’ and express the national root, and while he also portrays the artist’s investment of divinity into the land as contingent on property ownership, he also presents indigeneity as an essential part of the national root. Implicitly, the poet’s ability to ‘feel’ or sense the national Ideal through his elevated soul gives him an essential and indigenous connection to the national territory. This bipartite construction of Native Americans is embedded in an early American ideology that considers tribal groups wards of the government, and prohibits them from devising property to any other source than the government, as enacted in the trade and intercourse acts of 1790, 1793, 1796, 1799, and 1802. Effectively, Native Americans held land, but title ultimately rested with the American government.¹⁴⁸ This preclusion from title was justified by definitions of reason that strategically excluded tribal populations; and these definitions of reason stemmed from early American perceptions of property that were based on Locke’s ‘Rule of Reason’, which stated that God gave the world ‘to the use of the Industrious and Rational (and Labour was to be his Title to it;) not to the Fancy or Covetousness of the Quarrelsome and Contentious’.¹⁴⁹ As Ferguson asserts, questions remain implicit in Locke’s ‘statement of relative capacities and disproportionate rewards’, such as, ‘who are the rational, and why do they deserve a greater benefit? How are the wrongfully contentious to be identified, and by what means are they deprived of property?’.¹⁵⁰ An answer can be gleaned by referring to Benjamin Franklin’s statement, ‘So convenient it is a thing to be a reasonable creature [. . .] since it enables one to find or make a reason for everything one has a

¹⁴⁷ John Locke, ‘Of Identity and Diversity’, in *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (London: Penguin, 2004), p. 307.

¹⁴⁸ Ferguson, p. 158.

¹⁴⁹ Locke, ‘Of Property’, p. 291.

¹⁵⁰ Ferguson, p. 159.

mind to'.¹⁵¹ In other words, the outcome of conflict is determined by 'who first defines and then exercises reason'.¹⁵²

Yet in addition to this bipartite conceptualization of Native Americans, Poe also sympathizes with them to an extent. As Bergland observes, the 'Red Death is the ultimate Indian ghost, the disembodied phantom of inescapable racial hatred and ineradicable national guilt'.¹⁵³ Chapter Four will discuss how Poe engages with colonial guilt within a Neoplatonic frame in 'The Mask of the Red Death', and place these colonial themes in context of Poe's debate against Transcendentalism, which he presents as detrimental to the soul's elevation through the Spirit. For Poe, the ways Native Americans have been 'at all points unmercifully despoiled, assassinated, and dishonoured' reveal and indict a society as lacking the Spiritual virtues of love and charity.¹⁵⁴ This is not to draw Poe as overly sympathetic to Native American plights. In her study of Emerson and Indian Removal, Bethany Schneider notes how Emerson's protests against the forced evacuation of Cherokees to Indian Territory are really protests against the underlying assumption of Removal policies, that Indian Removal relied on a separation of sovereignty from place. According to Schneider, the 'unsutured nation' for Emerson is not the Cherokee's; rather, 'removal "deprives" Emerson and other white Americans of a certain naturalized white sovereignty'.¹⁵⁵ In this regard, the American confiscation of tribal lands through Removal or military force can signal where naturalized ownership of the land fails even while it signals where it is 'destined'. Chapter Five utilizes the methodologies gained from previous chapters to facilitate interpretive leverage into Poe's tale, 'The Man That Was Used Up', and continue discussion of questions about colonial guilt. This chapter will also examine how Poe reiterates the trope of male corporeal disarticulation at colonial contact sites as a result of precluded access to land. At the same time, Poe displays the disarticulate corpus as one lacking the elevated immortal soul, and, in this sense, it also symbolizes an indictment against a society that foregoes the ideals of love and Spirituality. Chapter Six will use the same methodologies presented in this thesis to interpret scenes of colonial violence, dismemberment and putrescence in *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym of Nantucket*. An interpretive framework for examining *Pym* is

¹⁵¹ Franklin in Ferguson, p. 157.

¹⁵² Ferguson, p. 157.

¹⁵³ Bergland, p. 118.

¹⁵⁴ Poe, *Marginalia*, p. 351.

¹⁵⁵ Bethany Schneider, 'Boudinot's Change: Boudinot, Emerson and Ross on Cherokee Removal', *ELH*, 75 (2008), 151-177 (p. 167).

constructed through discussion of Poe's epistemological concerns in his novel, especially in regards to his disagreements with pantheistic philosophies, and Transcendentalism in particular. Analysis will also involve reading Pym's journey as an allegorical search for the national 'root', with its unreachability expressing Poe's criticism against early America for its preoccupation with property and not the values associated with national Ideality and an elevated spirit.

In attempting to express the spiritual 'root' of the nation Poe both converges and diverges from Jackson's quest to find a 'root' of property ownership. In one respect, Poe sublimates the drive to create a stable root for property ownership, emphasizing the divine aspects of property creation already existent in Locke's theory; and he implicitly endorses America's rightful and indigenous inheritance of the national territory, even if he does not entirely endorse Indian Removal. Simultaneously, Poe sets himself apart from the marketplace ideologies of manhood, and values the spiritual property that he perceives the poet with 'artistic sensibilities' as owning. Put differently, Poe sees America's 'self-made men' as lacking the soul elevated by the Christian ideal of the Holy Spirit, and, by extension the values of charity and love. Indeed, as John William Ward observes, 'Perhaps the most severe condemnation that can be made of nineteenth-century America is that it equated charity and love with a lack of manhood'. This relegation of such ideals is due to the fact that early America emphasized a type of character, one that was 'expansive, self-reliant, aggressive', and anything opposite to these traits was 'at best unworthy, at worst unmasculine'.¹⁵⁶ The broken male body in Poe's corpus ultimately condemns early American society, and while its context is Jacksonian America's political and economic scene, for Poe, it also points to a larger, theological concern. This theological backdrop will be discussed in detail in the following chapter.

¹⁵⁶ Ward in Pugh, pp. 42, 41.

Chapter Two: 'The Most Poetic Topic in the World': Women and Neoplatonism in Poe's Fiction and Theory

Introduction

In *Fables of Mind: An Inquiry Into Poe's Fiction*, Joan Dayan states, 'When Poe claims certainty he wants to be doubted; when he taxes himself with the labours of composition (or the presence of uncertainty), he wants to be trusted'. Poe says least when he appears to say most, and consciously sets up a kind of 'knowing' in his fiction in order to 'expose and subvert' it. His description of 'the bright orbs that shine in heaven – in the waving of the grain-fields – in the slanting of tall, Eastern trees – in the blue distance of mountains' that repetitively circles in a sequence of 'in' for half a page, and his regalement of great truths – such as the 'Immortal instinct', 'sense of the Beautiful', and 'wild effort to reach the Beauty above' – mock 'exquisite jargon', and establish the pattern for the 'falsely assertive thinking in the periphrasis of his monomaniacal narrators'. Images of the 'human brain' leaning to the '*Infinite*', fondling the 'phantom of the idea' in hopes of 'intellectually believing it when it is conceived', and the 'class of superior intelligences, to whom the human bias alluded to may wear all the character of monomania', martial against tendencies to 'seek groundless principles of unity', and expose 'false illusions in the impulse to metaphysics' and 'pretensions to knowledge'.¹⁵⁷

On one hand, Dayan's reading provides interpretive leverage into Poe's fiction, especially his critique of an empiricism that subsumes the phenomenal world to mensuration and trades phantasies for epistemological limits. On the other, Dayan dangerously conflates the narrators of Poe's essays with those of his fiction. The homogenization of these distinct voices enacts a post-modernism that figures Poe almost as antecedent to sensibilities that emphasize the constructed nature of knowledge, and the reduction of 'great truths' to surface representation. While such methodology is important, it overly modernizes Poe, and neglects his historical and philosophical context. Namely, that when Poe speaks of the soul's 'pure elevation', our 'wild effort to reach the Beauty above', or the 'divine' yet ungraspable 'joys' glimpsed at through

¹⁵⁷ Dayan, Joan, *Fables of Mind: An Inquiry Into Poe's Fiction* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1987), pp. 11-13.

music he is not constructing a hoax, but aligning himself with a critical tradition grounded in a Neoplatonism that fuses Platonic thought with Christian doctrine.¹⁵⁸ Marked by metaphysical concerns, and the soul's existence and function in the dichotomies between the eternal Ideal and the mutable world and the corruptible and incorruptible body, this criticism is put forth in works such as Schlegel's *A Course of Lectures on Dramatic Art and Literature*. Prominent tropes in this critical work includes questions of soteriology, the attainment of the Ideal through Beauty and love, and 'mystical' undercurrents of meaning.

This Neoplatonism organizes much of Poe's fiction and criticism. Eric W. Carlson observes in 'Poe on the Soul of Man' that many of Poe's early tales are marked by a 'Neoplatonic and Pastoral vision' depicted as 'dreams' and 'memories' of a 'lost paradise or Eden'.¹⁵⁹ This recurrent vision is: 'Al Aaraaf, the realm of Platonic Beauty. Symbolically, it is also the flower-bedecked and richly perfumed isle of Zante, and the Valley of Many-Coloured Grass where Eleonora and her cousin dwelt. It is the classical Helen symbolizing the beauty of the soul'.¹⁶⁰ It is an 'ideal that has brought the lost wanderer back to "his own native shore," his essential self, his soul'. And it 'represents the potential of harmony of self with nature, of self with soul', and 'of soul with some transcendent, Platonic Beauty'.¹⁶¹ Although Carlson traces these Neoplatonic strands to the possibility of a 'Collective Unconscious' and his thesis that Poe's 'central theme' is 'Man's search for his soul' and his 'discovery of the psychic potential' realized 'in a rebirth of the unified and creative self' as brought about through 'the death of the "ordinary life"', he unearths important tropes in Poe's corpus: the representation of Platonic beauty, the ideal woman as a symbol of the soul's realization, the attainment of a Platonic ideal, and a fictive context that takes for granted a Neoplatonic universe in Poe's writing.¹⁶²

This Platonic-Christian cosmology outlined in Poe's criticism and the critical tradition he subscribes to provides the setting for many of his tales. Again, it is important to distinguish between the narrative voice of his critical essays, and the first-person narrators of his fiction. While Poe's criticism clearly gestures to a Platonic and Christian teleology, his fiction depicts characters that are often purblind by a strict empiricism or 'false' metaphysics, or too fixated on

¹⁵⁸ Edgar Allan Poe, 'The Philosophy of Composition', in *The Works of Edgar Allan Poe*, ed. by John H. Ingram, 4 vols (Edinburgh: Adam and Charles Black, 1875), III, 266-278 (p. 269).

¹⁵⁹ Eric W. Carlson, 'Poe on the Soul of Man' (Baltimore: Edgar Allan Poe Society and the Enoch Pratt Free Library, 1973), p. 4.

¹⁶⁰ Carlson, pp. 14-15.

¹⁶¹ Carlson, p. 5.

¹⁶² Carlson, p. 10.

material gain, to comprehend spirituality. Vis-à-vis the limits of epistemology, Dayan correctly observes that Poe's characters are often trapped by the 'pretensions' and 'false illusions' of knowledge; but she does not consider how this knowledge alienates Poe's fictional scholars from their divinity. It is this disjuncture between the 'false illusions' of an epistemology that supposes an encompassed divinity and a 'real' Neoplatonic Universe that provides the central tension in many of Poe's tales.

Against the contextual backdrop of Neoplatonic thought and criticism this chapter will present a general model for analysing identity construction in Poe's fiction. It will consider how Poe depicts women as signifiers of the male soul, and will build a methodology around this depiction to gain interpretive insight into Poe's engagement with the notion of epistemological limitation and the way he represents the American preoccupation with property. Poe's representations of the married body provide a useful site around which to construct an interpretive methodology for several reasons. Most significantly, Poe's positioning of women as signifiers of the state of the male soul and its ability to achieve soteriological completion means that the relationships between Poe's scholarly narrators and their wives dramatize the soul's condition within an epistemology that either precludes Spirituality or collapses the Spirit into the material world. Within such an enactment the female body signals the limit of systematic knowledge, the point where a natural teleology becomes an artificial epistemology.¹⁶³ As well, the identificatory collapse between the male and female selves is translated not only from a theological framework, but a judicial one as well, due to property laws that transformed the married woman into the *femme covert*, or 'hidden woman', whose rights to ownership were transferred to her husband, as discussed in the previous chapter. Considered within an early American ideology that made full citizenship contingent on property ownership, the identificatory collapse pertaining to marriage not only means a spiritual completion but, more pragmatically, a legal one as well for the male subject. Since the married body ties together concerns about property and the body with theology it is beneficial to consider how women are depicted in Poe's fiction in order to understand the theological slant that effects how Poe writes the body in relation to property ownership.

¹⁶³ For discussion of the displacement of teleology by epistemology see Isobel Armstrong, *Victorian Poetry: Poetry, Poetics, Politics* (London: Routledge, 1993), p. 7.

The texts utilized in this chapter to construct an interpretive methodology of Poe's literature are works which Poe was arguably familiar with, as indicated through direct references, or as evinced by contemporary criticism, with the only exception being Mather Byles's *A Discourse on the Present Vileness of the Body, And It's [sic] Future Glorious Change by Christ*, which is utilized to illustrate the idea that the lack of the Holy Spirit leads to bodily disarticulation, particularly putrescence, in Poe's work. This methodological chapter is presented in subsections, beginning with an outline of Platonic epistemology as presented in the *Timaeus* and *Symposium* in order to discuss the basic binary of the Ideal and material worlds, and to present how the ideal, or Beauty, is achieved through artistic creation. The next section looks at how Platonic epistemology influences Poe's aesthetic methodologies put forth in 'The Poetic Principle' and 'The Philosophy of Composition', and considers how women are figured in Poe's aesthetics as agents that enable the male poet to achieve Beauty, and divinity. Discussion on 'The Poetic Principle' will also include the Judaeo-Christian aspects of Neoplatonic syncretism, beginning with an analysis of Pauline soteriology, particularly the figures of Adam and Christ and how they are associated with earthly and celestial imagery. Methodological discussion then relates to Mather Byles's sermon in order to gain insight into the earthly and putrescent body which recurs in Poe's literature. The following subsection discusses Neoplatonic works that influence how Poe depicts women, including Augustus Schlegel's *A Course of Lectures on Dramatic Art and Literature* (1803), Henry Nelson Coleridge's *Introduction to the Greek Classic Poets* (1830), and Baron Friedrich Heinrich Karl de la Motte Fouqué's *Undine* (1818). In-depth analysis of Poe's tale, 'Berenice' will then follow to corroborate methodological points and to move the thesis forward to discussion about Poe's representations of property.

Platonic Structures in Poe's Criticism

As Ross Murfin & Supriya M. Ray explain, the philosophy of Neoplatonism derives from the syncretism of Christianity and Platonic thought.¹⁶⁴ When discussing the influence of Neoplatonism on Poe's criticism and fiction it is easier to begin by outlining the major Platonic contributions to Neoplatonism first, particularly in regards to the concept of Eros and how it

¹⁶⁴ Ross Murfin & Supriya M. Ray, 'Neoplatonism', in *The Bedford Glossary of Critical and Literary Terms*, 2nd edn (Boston: Bedford/ St. Martin's, 2003), pp. 292-293 (p. 292).

relates to identity, and then evince how Platonism structures Poe's ideas related to art and the self. The reason for starting with Plato is that his concepts provide more of an organizing structure to Poe's ideas about art and Beauty. A useful starting point to discuss Neoplatonism derives from a Pythagorean idea that lends mathematical and musical concepts as framing postulates for Platonism. This idea is the Pythagorean discovery that mathematical principles govern musical intervals. The Pythagoreans believed that this principle was not only a basic law of the universe, but of its microcosm, man, who, in order to contemplate the harmonious universe, must also possess a numerical principle within.¹⁶⁵ As Aristotle explains the Pythagorean inter-relation between the self and Universe, 'There seems to be in us a sort of affinity to musical modes and rhythms, which makes many philosophers say that the soul is harmonia, others that it possesses harmonia'.¹⁶⁶ In other words, the soul itself is a harmony, and a growing knowledge of the cosmos cultivates a divine knowledge of the self. This connection between music, numbers and souls is generalized in Pythagorean thought to be the basis of any true knowledge of the cosmos, as exemplified in the idea of the 'music of the spheres', a cosmological paradigm that correlates musical octave and sestet scales with the seven planets and fixed stars, with each 'sphere' emitting a corresponding note.¹⁶⁷

Pythagorean echoes are heard in the Platonic idea that true morality is a harmony of the soul, and that the human soul mirrors the Soul of the World. In his account of divine creation, *Timaeus*, Plato limns this connection between the individual and World souls against the background of a Cosmos whose intelligibility and harmonious order are explained by the idea of a Creator, or 'Demiurge', working to plan, and forming the unique world from a perfect, eternal model.¹⁶⁸ This basic binary between the ideal eternal model and its physical, earthly reflection is the under-riding logic not only for the world's creation, but of creation in general for Plato. In Platonic reasoning, when an artificer utilizes a perfect, eternal model then the art he creates is necessarily beautiful; however, when an artificer uses an earthly model that has already come into material existence, then his art will not be beautiful because it fails to reflect Ideality.¹⁶⁹ The Universe is constructed by the Architect in accordance with the binary between the Ideal and

¹⁶⁵ Douglas Brooks, *Number and Pattern in the Eighteenth-century Novel: Defoe, Fielding, Smollett and Sterne* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1973), pp. 2-5.

¹⁶⁶ Aristotle in Brooks, p. 7.

¹⁶⁷ Brooks, pp. 5-7.

¹⁶⁸ Brooks, pp. 11-12.

¹⁶⁹ Plato, *Timaeus*, ed. by T.E. Page, E. Capps, W.H.D. Rouse, trans. by Rev. R.G. Bury, 12 vols (London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1929), VII, 1-253 (pp. 49-51).

physical worlds; or, as Plato states, ‘it is plain that’ the Architect ‘fixed his gaze on the eternal, for the Cosmos is the fairest of all that has come into existence and the best of all causes’.¹⁷⁰ Appurtenant to the creation of the perfect Universe is its imbuelement with a soul. The Platonic ‘World Soul’ is a tripartite entity structured from an ideal component that is ‘indivisible and remains always the same’, a mutable component ‘which is transient and divisible in bodies’, and a component that is midway between the eternal and mutable that is ‘compounded out of the twain’.¹⁷¹ With the presence of a soul owing to the providence of the Creator, the Universe comes into existence as a Living Creature, within which all other creatures are portions.¹⁷²

Two details of Plato’s description of the universe that are particularly important to this chapter are: the way Beauty necessarily involves a reflection of Ideality, as discussed in greater detail below in relation to ‘The Poetic Principle’; and the world soul’s tripartite ordering, with an intermediary component between the Ideal and earthly aspects. This triune structure is evinced not only in the construction of the human soul, but in the construction of the physical universe through the four elements. For Plato, human souls are composed from the residue of the Soul of the Universe, with their mortal frames constructed ‘around the immortal principal of the soul’ in order to give the soul ‘all the body to be its vehicle’.¹⁷³ In addition to the immortal soul the human frame is also imbued with a second ‘mortal’ soul that carries within it all the ‘fearful and unavoidable passions’, including pleasure, pain, the ‘foolish counsellors’ of rashness, fear, anger, hope, as well as ‘irrational sensation’ and ‘all-daring lust’. In order to avoid pollution of the divine soul, the ‘isthmus’ of the neck is set between the two souls, with the mortal soul in the thorax of the body, and the divine soul in the head, so that it can listen to reason and subdue the desires. The third soul, which is subject to appetites for food and drink, is ‘tied up’ in the stomach, as though ‘it were a creature which, though savage, they must necessarily keep joined to the rest to feed’.¹⁷⁴

The elemental construction of the universe also has a tripartite organization: the universe is first moulded from earth and fire by the Creator with the two intermediary elements of air and water added later. The earth is associated with the mutable, material world, and fire with what is ‘indivisible’ and ‘always the same’, with water and air connecting the mutable and ideal

¹⁷⁰ Plato, p. 53.

¹⁷¹ Plato, pp. 65-67.

¹⁷² Plato, p. 55.

¹⁷³ Plato, p. 91, p. 179.

¹⁷⁴ Plato, pp. 181-183.

elements and bringing harmony to the whole.¹⁷⁵ These elements also correspond with the constitution of humanity; for example, bone is made from sifted earth kneaded with marrow and alternately placed in water and fire until it is soluble to neither, while the stars, which are wrought from fire, are equal to the number of souls in the world, with each soul corresponding with a star.¹⁷⁶ This elemental idiom becomes significant when placed within the Neoplatonic context and inter-articulated with Christianized meanings. Looking ahead slightly in this thesis, these elements become tied to the Christian soteriological dichotomy between the flesh and the Holy Spirit, with earth imagery often related to the flesh and body, and fire, water, and air representing, if not the Holy Spirit, then at least a conduit to divinity. For example, in Tertullian's treatise, 'On the Flesh of Christ', he ponders, 'what is flesh but earth in an especial form?', and he asks the reader to think of 'the muscles as clods; of the bones as stones; the mamillary glands as kinds of pebbles', to look 'upon the close junctions of the nerves as propagations of roots', to see 'the hair as grass, and the very treasures of marrow within our bones as ores of flesh'.¹⁷⁷ In contrast, the Holy Spirit is compared to each element *except* the earth: such as a flame, breath, wind, baptismal water.¹⁷⁸ While these elemental comparisons are already in the Bible, they are emphasized in Neoplatonically-inflected literature.

Another aspect of Plato's conceptions of identity that is important to this thesis is the use of education and knowledge to apprehend and create the Beautiful as a reflection of the Ideal. Within Platonic epistemology the method for attaining divinity is intrinsically tied to the accumulation of proper knowledge, as well as through acts that create Beauty by reflecting the Ideal. Plato explains that of the three human souls, the one that remains in repose becomes weakest, while the soul exercised most becomes strongest. For this reason, it is important to service the divine soul, lest the mortal ones gain mastery over the self, and cause the preclusion of immortality. Plato states, 'God has given to each of us, as his daemon, that kind of soul which is housed in the top of our body and which raises us – seeing that we are not an earthly but a heavenly plant – up from earth toward our kindred in heaven'. He who devotes himself to 'true thoughts', and to exercising the divine soul above the others, 'must necessarily and inevitably

¹⁷⁵ Plato, pp. 59-61.

¹⁷⁶ Plato, p. 193, p. 91.

¹⁷⁷ Quintus Septimius Florens Tertullianus, *The Treatise of Quintus Septimius Florens Tertullianus on The Flesh of Christ*, in *The Writings of Quintus Septimius Florens Tertullianus*, in *The Writings of Tertullian*, trans. by Peter Holmes, 2 vols (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1870), II, pp. 163-214, (p. 185).

¹⁷⁸ Luke 3. 16, Ezekiel 37. 5, Ezekiel 37. 9, Matthew 3. 16.

think thoughts that are immortal and divine', and thereby 'lay hold of truth' and 'partake of immortality' so far as it is possible for human nature to do so. One strengthens the divine soul by learning 'the harmonies and revolutions of the Universe' so that the soul is brought back into its inherent accord from which it was distorted at birth. By achieving harmony between the divine soul and 'intellections and revolutions of the Universe', and 'duly magnifying that daemon', or divine soul, within the human frame one establishes a life that is 'supremely blessed'. In contrast, those devoted to 'lusts' or 'contentions' 'must of necessity be filled with opinions that are wholly mortal', thereby foregoing immortality.¹⁷⁹

The idea that knowledge and education harmonize the divine soul with the divinity of the Universe has a parallel in Plato's *Symposium*, in which the education of erotics leads to the realization of the Beautiful. The Platonic quest for the beautiful is motivated by the human impulse to generate. As Plato explains, mortal nature seeks as far as possible to be immortal, and its sole way to accomplish this is through regeneration, be it sexual regeneration, regeneration of the soul, or the production of new knowledge. Although senescence creates loss, youth is perpetuated through reproduction. This corporeal aging and becoming is analogous with the terms of the soul, whose passions, desires, pains, and fears are never self-same, but always coming to be and always perishing. The same is said for knowledge and science, because forgetfulness of knowledge is the exiting of science from the mind, while studying instils a fresh memory to replace the departing one. Thus through perpetual and simultaneous gain and loss, every mortal thing is preserved, not by remaining the same as does the divine ideal, but by a regenerative process in which what is old replaces itself with what is young. In this way, the mortal shares in immortality.¹⁸⁰

The difference between mortal and divine regeneration is outlined in the distinction between biological pregnancy and what Plato calls being 'pregnant in soul'. While biological pregnancy furnishes 'immortality, remembrance, and happiness' through the procreation of children, those pregnant in soul 'conceive those things' that are 'appropriate for soul to conceive and bear', such as prudence and virtue, and the things created by 'all the poets and all the craftsmen who are said to be inventive'. As Plato describes how one 'pregnant in soul' engenders beauty: whenever a youth is pregnant in his soul with virtues he desires to produce

¹⁷⁹ Plato, pp. 245-247.

¹⁸⁰ Plato, *Symposium*, trans. by Seth Benardete (London: Chicago UP, 2001), pp. 38-39.

‘offspring’ and so searches for the beautiful with which he might generate. When he meets a beautiful, generous and naturally gifted soul he cleaves to it, and becomes suddenly fluent in speeches about virtue, and tries to educate his beloved. In this way, by contacting the one who is beautiful, the one pregnant in soul engenders ‘offspring’ through the arts, and whether the lover is present or absent, ‘he holds the beautiful one in memory and nurtures with him what has been generated in common’, thereby creating ‘children’ which are beautiful and immortal.¹⁸¹

This relationship between the one pregnant in soul and the one who is beautiful is the liminal step of the *ladder of erotics* which leads to perfect revelations of the beautiful, and which follows a series of stages: after the lover, or one pregnant in soul, engenders beautiful speeches he must realize that the beauty of one body may be found in any body, and thereby become a lover of all bodies, believing that affection for only one body is petty. From there the lover must believe that the beauty of souls is more honourable than that of the body, and so cleave to someone who has a beautiful soul, even if only a slight youthful charm. After these pursuits, the lover leads his beloved to the sciences, and in looking at the vast beauty of sciences no longer remains content with the beauty of one person or practice, ‘but with a permanent turn to the vast open sea of the beautiful’, beholds it and gives it birth in ‘many beautiful and magnificent speeches and thoughts’. Within this field of science the lover must discern a certain philosophical science that has beauty as its object, and having pursued his education to this stage will ‘suddenly glimpse something wonderfully beautiful in its nature’, the ‘very thing’ ‘for whose sake alone all the prior labours were taken’. Basically, the student encounters the eternal and immutable ideal, described as: ‘something that is, first of all, always becoming and neither coming to be nor perishing, nor increasing nor passing away’; that is ‘not beautiful in one respect and ugly in another, nor at one time so, and at another time not’; that is not imagined as a corporeal form with ‘a kind of face or hands or anything else in which body shares’; nor as ‘any speech or any science’. Rather, this form of beauty is ‘as it is alone by itself and with itself, always being of a single form; while all other things that share in it do so in such a way that while it neither becomes anything more or less, nor is affected at all, the rest do come to be and perish’.¹⁸²

¹⁸¹ *Symposium*, pp. 39-40.

¹⁸² *Symposium*, p. 41.

Thus by pursuing his education in the erotics, the student climbs a ladder of knowledge that leads to the ‘perfect end’ of beauty found in the ideal. Beginning with ‘beautiful things’ and using them as steps, the student proceeds upwards for the sake of beauty: ‘from one to two, and from two to all beautiful bodies; and from beautiful bodies to beautiful pursuits; and from pursuits to beautiful lessons; and from lessons to end at that lesson, which is the lesson of nothing else than the beautiful itself; and at last to know what is beauty itself’. After arriving at the divine beauty that is ‘pure, clean, unmixed, and not infected with human flesh’ or ‘other mortal foolishness’, the student is able to engender the ‘true’ because he ‘lays hold of the true’, as opposed to engendering ‘phantom images of virtue’ by laying hold of phantom images. Once he grasps hold of the beautiful and true and engenders true virtue, ‘it lies within him to become dear to god and, if it is possible for any human being, to become immortal as well’.¹⁸³

‘The Poetic Principle’

Having outlined some of the main ideas in Platonic epistemology pertaining to identity, Beauty, and the inter-relation between Beauty and the self’s divinity, we can now discuss how Plato’s ideas figure in Poe’s own critical theories. In ‘The Poetic Principle’, the Platonic concept of beauty prominently figures in Poe’s division of the ‘world of the mind’ into the faculties of Pure Intellect, Taste, and Moral Sense. While Moral Sense is tied to Conscience, duty and obligation, and Intellect is concerned with Truth and Reason, Taste ‘informs us of the Beautiful’ and ‘contents herself’ by ‘waging war’ upon Vice solely on the grounds of its disproportion, deformity, and ‘animosity to the fitting’, and bringing the ill-formed and discordant back to ‘the appropriate, to the harmonious, in a word, to Beauty’.¹⁸⁴ Poe’s partial definition of Beauty as proportion and harmony harks to Pythagorean and Platonic models, while the connection between Taste and Beauty makes Beauty’s recognition contingent on the ‘ladder’ of knowledge. The correlation between Taste and accumulated knowledge can be seen by considering Edmund Burke’s *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*. For Burke, Taste refers to ‘the faculties of the mind which are affected

¹⁸³ *Symposium*, p. 42.

¹⁸⁴ Edgar Allan Poe, ‘The Poetic Principle’, in *The Works of Edgar Allan Poe*, ed. by John H. Ingram, 4 vols (Edinburgh: Adam and Charles Black, 1875), III, 197-218 (pp. 202-203).

with, or which form a judgement of the works of imagination and the elegant arts'.¹⁸⁵ On one hand, Taste is natural and 'nearly common to all', in that we all experience 'pleasure arising from a natural object, so far as each perceives it justly imitated', 'satisfaction in seeing an agreeable figure', and sympathy proceeding 'from a striking and affecting incident'. On the other hand, proper judgment is not in the capability of everyone. This is because it is from the 'difference in knowledge that that what we commonly, though with no great exactness, call a difference in taste proceeds', and 'critical Taste does not depend upon a superior principle in men, but upon superior knowledge'.¹⁸⁶

The discerning powers of Taste are related to the Senses, Imagination, and Judgment, or the 'natural powers' with which humanity engages with the objective world.¹⁸⁷ 'Imagination' denotes the creative power of 'representing at pleasure the images of things in the order and manner in which they were received by the senses, or in combining those images in a new manner and according to a different order'. It is 'incapable of producing any thing absolutely new' and can only 'vary the disposition of those ideas which it has received from the senses'. It is also the province of pleasure, pain, fear, hope and all the passions connected with them. For since the imagination is 'only the representative of the senses', it is only 'pleased or displeased with the images from the same principle on which the sense is pleased or displeased with the realities'.¹⁸⁸ Taste is a response and product of the Imagination, in that it includes the affect given by a natural or imitated object. In this regard, its principle is uniform to everyone: there is no difference in the manner of how people are affected, or in the cause of affection, but rather in the *degree* of difference, which stems from either 'a greater degree of natural sensibility', or from 'closer and longer attention to the object'. In its most general definition, Taste is 'partly made up of a perception of the primary pleasures of sense, of the secondary pleasures of the imagination, and of the conclusions of the reasoning faculty'. 'Wrong Taste' is caused by a defect in judgement, which may arise from a natural weakness of understanding, or much more commonly, from a failure to exercise the proper faculties, as well as 'ignorance, inattention,

¹⁸⁵ Edmund Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*, ed. by J.T. Boulton (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1958), p. 13.

¹⁸⁶ Burke, pp. 18-20.

¹⁸⁷ Burke, p. 13.

¹⁸⁸ Burke, pp. 16-17.

prejudice, rashness', obstinacy and in short, all the vices which 'pervert the judgement' and induce us to suppose there are 'no settled principles of reason'.¹⁸⁹

Burke's definitions of Taste and Imagination influence how Poe sets limitations on mimetic art. 'Just as the lily is repeated in the lake, or the eyes of Amaryllis in the mirror', says Poe, 'so is the mere oral or written repetition of these forms, and sounds, and colours, and odours, and sentiments, a duplicate source of delight'; yet this 'mere repetition' is 'not poetry'. The poet who 'simply' recreates the sensible world, even with a vivid 'truth of description', falls short of the Ideal, and 'has yet failed to prove his divine title', because there is 'still a something in the distance which he has been unable to obtain'. Representations which merely duplicate the empirical world – the repeated images of the lily 'repeated in a lake', the eyes repeated in the mirror – can only reiterate it *ad infinitum*, not transcend it. Such representations are products of the Burkean Imagination, duplicate images of reality recreated as empirically experienced or as arranged in a new order – and, as such, their 'mere repetition is not poetry'.¹⁹⁰ In contrast, the poetic work not only duplicates reality, but does so in a way that reflects the World Soul, that acknowledges 'something in the distance' beyond the material. In short, just as the Platonic Architect creates the necessarily beautiful by copying the Ideal, so does Poe's poet by fixing his gaze only on the Ideal and not the 'phantom' objects of the physical realm.

Just as beauty reflects the Ideal in Platonic epistemology, Poe also calls the divine 'something' beyond the physical realm the Beautiful, and connects it with humanity's realization of its soul. Poe's idea, 'An immortal instinct deep within the spirit of man is thus plainly a sense of the Beautiful', recalls Plato's 'immortal principle of the soul', or the divine component of the tripartite soul around which the mortal body is constructed. Again, the divine soul in *Timaeus* is the one that lays hold of truth and partakes of immortality, and must be tended to by learning the harmonies of the Universe. Poe transports this Platonic definition of soul into his own essay. In his description of purely mimetic art Poe states, 'We still have a thirst unquenchable' that 'belongs to the immortality of Man. It is at once a consequence and indication of the perennial existence'.¹⁹¹ In other words, the 'immortal instinct' – or immortal soul – 'thirsts' for the Ideal element which enables it to realize its own divine, 'perennial existence', but which cannot be found in the physical realm. The 'Beauty' Poe describes is therefore the Platonic Beauty that

¹⁸⁹ Burke, pp. 21-24.

¹⁹⁰ 'Poetic', p. 203.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*

‘raises’ humanity ‘up from earth toward our kindred in heaven’, and reminds us we are not ‘earthly’ but ‘heavenly’ beings. It is the glimpse of immortality which human divinity strives for, that situates our thoughts on the divine and immortal, and which enables us to partake of immortality.

This Platonic thread can be followed in the modes that Poe allows for Beauty’s instantiations. The ‘struggle to apprehend the supernal Loveliness’, what Poe terms the Poetic Sentiment or Principle, can take shape in arts such as painting, sculpture, architecture, dance, the ‘Landscape Garden’, ‘very especially in Music’, but most importantly in Poetry. Says Poe, ‘when by Poetry, or when by Music’ ‘we find ourselves melted into tears’, we weep through ‘a certain, petulant, impatient sorrow at our inability to grasp now, wholly, here on earth, at once and for ever, those divine and rapturous joys of which *through* the poem, or *through* the music, we attain to but brief and indeterminate glimpses’. It is through Music that ‘the soul most nearly attains the great end for which, when inspired by the Poetic Sentiment, it struggles – the creation of supernal Beauty’, and music comes to structure Poetry through such devices as metre, rhythm, and rhyme. In fact, Poe emphasizes Poetry’s inherent musicality, defining the ‘Poetry of words’ as ‘*The Rhythmical Creation of Beauty*’, and asserting that the ‘union of Poetry and Music’ offers the ‘widest field for the Poetic development’.¹⁹² These Platonic undertones gain resonance from a Pythagorean logic of ratio, proportion and arithmetic that influences the poem’s design. Its structure must follow ‘the precision and rigid consequence of a mathematical problem’ and be of limited length so that its brevity is in ‘direct ratio to the intensity’ of the poem’s ‘intended effect’. With a reading time of no longer than a ‘single sitting’ a poem can achieve ‘true poetical effect’ because its duration is made to ‘bear mathematical relation to its merit – in other words, to the excitement or elevation’.¹⁹³

Poe even states explicitly the elevating affect Beauty has on the soul. I provide at length two quotes from ‘The Poetic Principle’:

That pleasure which is at once the most pure, the most elevating, and the most intense, is derived, I maintain, from the contemplation of the Beautiful. In the contemplation of Beauty we alone find it possible to attain that pleasurable elevation, or excitement of the

¹⁹² ‘Poetic’, pp. 203-204.

¹⁹³ ‘Composition’, pp. 268-269.

soul, which we recognize as the Poetic Sentiment, and which is so easily distinguished from Truth, which is the satisfaction of Reason, or from Passion, which is the excitement of the heart.¹⁹⁴

Thus, although in a very cursory and imperfect manner, I have endeavoured to convey to you my conception of the Poetic Principle. It has been my purpose to suggest that, while this Principle itself is strictly and simply the Human Aspiration for Supernal Beauty, the manifestation of the Principle is always found in *an elevating excitement of the soul*, quite independent of that passion which is the intoxication of the Heart, or of that truth which is the satisfaction of the Reason.¹⁹⁵

This correlation between Beauty and the soul's elevation is repeated in 'The Philosophy of Composition': 'That pleasure which is at once the most intense, the most elevating, and the most pure, is, I believe, found in the contemplation of the beautiful', so that when 'men speak of Beauty', they refer 'just to that intense and pure elevation of *soul* – *not* of intellect, or of heart'. What particularly stands out in each of the above passages is the recurring juxtaposition between Beauty on one hand and Truth and Passion on the other, a dichotomy that reinforces Beauty as absolute and distinct from the phenomenal world. This distinction is maintained in Poe's explanation of Truth and Passion as attainable to an 'extent' in poetry, but only as functions that 'serve in elucidation, or aid in the general effect' of a poem, such as 'discords do in music, by contrast'. The relegation of Truth and Passion is due to the fact that Truth 'demands a precision' (implying mensuration) and Passion '*a homeliness*' (implying corporeality) that are 'absolutely antagonistic' to Beauty's elevating powers.¹⁹⁶

As the 'satisfaction of the intellect' and object of 'Reason', Truth denotes rational fields of study so far as they are strictly empirical.¹⁹⁷ In a sense, Truth is analogous with the middle 'rungs' of the Platonic ladder, the fields of science that lead one to Beauty, but cannot instantiate Beauty itself. Poe maintains that if through the attainment of Truth 'we are led to perceive a harmony where none was apparent before, we experience at once the true poetical effect, but this

¹⁹⁴ 'Poetic', p. 205.

¹⁹⁵ 'Poetic', p. 217.

¹⁹⁶ 'Composition', pp. 269-270.

¹⁹⁷ 'Composition', p. 270, 'Poetic', p. 202.

effect is referable to the harmony alone, and not in the least degree to the truth which merely served to render the harmony manifest'.¹⁹⁸ This idea of Truth as a vehicle *to* 'harmony' but lacking its own inherent divinity recalls Burke's model of determining if art's affecting power is attributable to the mode of representation or to the object being represented: if the object 'represented in poetry and painting is such, as we have no desire of seeing in the reality' then art's affect resides in the skill of imitation, not the 'thing itself'; however if the object is 'such as we should run to see if real' then the 'power of the poem or picture is more owing to the nature of the thing itself than to the mere effect of imitation'.¹⁹⁹ Burke's model calls into relief Truth's inherency, that as an empirical and representative construct Truth may point the way to the Beautiful, but the agency for elevation lies with the divine object itself.

Poe figures Passion as detrimental to the soul's struggle for Beauty through contrast with Platonic notions of love: 'For in regard to passion, alas! its tendency is to degrade rather than to elevate the Soul. Love, on the contrary – Love – the true, the divine Eros – the Uranian as distinguished from the Dionaeon Venus – is unquestionably the purest and truest of all poetical themes'.²⁰⁰ In *The Symposium*, Plato explains the difference between Uranian and the Dionaeon, or Pandemonian, types of love through the doubled figures of Aphrodite and Eros. The Uranian Aphrodite is the daughter of Uranos, from whom she receives her name. The second Aphrodite, called Pandemonus, is the daughter of Zeus and Dione. The two Erotes correspond with the two Aphrodites and are also Uranian and Pandemonian. True to its namesake, the Pandemonian Eros is indiscriminate, belongs to all, and is the type of Eros 'good-for-nothing' people experience. Unconstrained by noble ideals, those with this type of Eros not only fall in love with bodies over souls, but also have no compunction about loving the 'stupidest there can be' because their only goal is the act itself.²⁰¹ This attachment to the physical and not lasting means Pandemonian love itself is not lasting, and once the 'bloom of the body' leaves so does the pandemonian lover. Uranian Eros contrasts the Pandemonian in its attraction to character instead of body. Its attachment is life-long because it bonds with what is lasting. In brief, Uranian love is beautiful and divine whilst Pandemonian love emphasizes corporeality.²⁰²

¹⁹⁸ 'Poetic', p. 217.

¹⁹⁹ Burke, pp. 49-50.

²⁰⁰ 'Poetic', p. 217.

²⁰¹ *Symposium*, pp. 10-11

²⁰² *Symposium*, p. 17.

When Poe calls Uranian love the ‘purest and truest of all poetical themes’ he establishes Eros as a corollary to Beauty, and in this regard further embeds his criticism within Platonic epistemology. As a vehicle to Beauty, Eros has similarities with Truth in that both are earthly manifestations that can lead to the divine and immortal, but can be detrimental to the process of achieving Beauty if mistaken for Beauty itself. The function of Eros as a conduit to Beauty is an informing principle both explicit and implied in *The Symposium* and is commensurate with Poe’s own conceptualization of Beauty: Plato says eros is not ‘of the beautiful’, but of ‘engendering and bringing to birth in the beautiful’; he defines Eros as a ‘great daemon’ who exists in the transitive space between god and mortal, mortal and immortal, capable of ‘interpreting and ferrying’ things between the two realms, and Agathon notes that ‘everyone whom Eros touches proves to be a poet, “though he be without the Muses before”’.²⁰³ The process as to how Eros enables beauty’s creation is outlined by the ladder of erotics when the person ‘pregnant in soul’ cleaves body and soul to another beautiful and naturally gifted soul, thereby inspiring the creation of Beauty in poetry, speeches and art. As suggested in Plato’s creation story on the origins of humanity, the force that compels this corporeal and spiritual union is Eros. Although this story is well-known, it is still worth recounting because of its importance to the way Poe depicts Beauty, particularly in relation to women.

In Plato’s creation story, humanity was originally constituted of three sexes, the male and female, as well as a third androgynous sex with attributes of both. The shape of the androgynes was round as a whole, with the sides and back forming a circle. Each had four arms and legs, a cylindrical neck, one head, two faces set in opposite directions, four ears, and two sets of genitals. They had awesome strength but were too proud and attempted to displace the gods by ascending to the heavens. Because of this, the gods decided to cut the androgynes in two to make them weaker yet at the same time more numerous and useful. When the humans were split in half their faces were turned forwards so that they might face their cut and remain more orderly, and they were then healed and smoothed into human shape. However, desiring their missing halves, the ‘split’ humans threw their arms around each other, entangling themselves in their desire to grow together, and began to die off from hunger and inactivity based on their unwillingness to ever be apart. Zeus took pity on the humans and supplied another device by arranging their genitals to the front of their bodies so not only would generation be possible, but

²⁰³ *Symposium*, p.37, pp. 32-33, p. 26.

there would be satiety in their company that would allow them to attend to the rest of their livelihoods. Thus, because humans are separated from their ‘other halves’, they all have, ‘inborn in themselves, Eros for one another – Eros, the bringer-together of their ancient nature who tries to make one out of two and to heal their human nature’. And because of this split each person is a ‘token human being’, always searching for the other token and desiring ‘conjunction and fusion with the beloved, to become one from two’. Love is this ‘desire and pursuit of the whole’.²⁰⁴

In ‘The Poetic Principle’ Poe lists the ‘modes’ of Architecture, Music, Poetry, etc. by which Beauty is reified, and delineates Truth and Passion, which both juxtapose, as well as provides the steps toward, Beauty. Poe also illustrates the ‘simple elements’, or sensible experiences, that ‘induce in the Poet himself the true poetical effect’: the ‘songs of birds’, ‘harp of Aeolus’, ‘blue distance of mountains’, ‘half-hidden brooks’, ‘sequestered lakes’, and ‘far-distant undiscovered islands’ suggest Neoplatonic themes of music and of something ‘beyond’ the immediately empirical.²⁰⁵ But what resonates most with Neoplatonic ideals is the female figure when Poe states that poetical effect is felt in

the beauty of woman, in the grace of her step, in the lustre of her eye, in the melody of her voice, in her soft laughter, in her sigh, in the harmony of the rustling of her robes. He deeply feels it in her winning endearments, in her burning enthusiasms, in her gentle charities, in her meek and devotional endurances; but above all, ah, far above all, he kneels to it, he worships it in the faith, in the purity, in the strength, in the altogether divine majesty of her *love*.²⁰⁶

These sentiments recur when Poe interprets Byron’s ‘Stanzas to Augusta’: ‘It is the soul-elevating idea that no man can consider himself entitled to complain of Fate while in his adversity he still retains the unwavering love of woman’; and more famously, when Poe says, ‘the death then of a beautiful woman is unquestionably the most poetic topic in the world, and equally is it beyond doubt that the lips best suited for such topic are those of a bereaved lover’.²⁰⁷ Associations with ‘beauty’, ‘melody’, ‘harmony’, ‘the most poetic topic in the world’, and the

²⁰⁴ *Symposium*, pp. 19-22.

²⁰⁵ ‘Poetic’, p. 217.

²⁰⁶ ‘Poetic’, p. 218.

²⁰⁷ ‘Poetic’, p. 216, ‘Composition’, p. 272.

‘soul-elevating idea’ establish women as corollary to the achievement of divine Beauty, and within the model of Plato’s erotics they are the ‘beautiful’ and ‘gifted’ whom the artist, ‘pregnant in soul’, cleaves to in order to engender the Beautiful. Uranian Eros is therefore the force that compels the poet towards the feminine Other, or as Poe explains, the poetic effect is induced, ‘above all’, in the ‘the altogether divine majesty’ of a woman’s love. Thus, while the divine love between a poet and woman is not the only inspiration for Beauty, it is ‘above all’ the most significant. What sets it apart from say the ‘volutas of the flower’ or ‘slanting of tall eastern trees’ is that, as an aspect of Uranian love, it is also the ‘desire and pursuit’ of completion. In this regard Beauty and immortality are engendered through the communion with the ‘other half’ that gives ‘wholeness’ to the self. This inter-relationship in which the female figure signifies the other ‘half’ of the artist’s identity gains resonance when considered within a Judaeo-Christian theological framework to become a central trope in Poe’s dramatizations of the conflict between the empirical and spiritual self.

Pauline Soteriology and Poe’s Corpus

The syncretisation of Platonic with Christian tropes recurs throughout ‘The Poetic Principle’: Poe calls Beauty ‘an ecstatic prescience of the glories beyond the grave’, states, ‘We are often made to feel, with a shivering delight, that from an earthly harp are stricken notes which cannot have been unfamiliar to the angels’, and says of Tennyson, ‘No poet is so little of the earth, earthy’.²⁰⁸ We can see a similar conflation in ‘Pinakidia’, where Poe relates the *Symposium* to the Genesis creation story when he states, ‘that man at first was male and female, and that, though Jupiter cleft them asunder, there was a natural love towards one another, seems to be only a corruption of the account in Genesis of Eve’s being made from Adam’s rib’.²⁰⁹ Yet why does Poe specifically employ an earth trope in relation to poetry and the Platonic referents of Beauty and music through the ‘grave’ and ‘earthly harp’? And what is the logic that prompts Poe to tie together two basically unrelated narratives as though one was a retelling and ‘corruption’ of a Christian precedent? This subsection will lay the groundwork for an answer to these questions by discussing in detail the Judeo-Christian ideals of love, charity and the Holy

²⁰⁸ ‘Poetic’, pp. 203, 204, 216.

²⁰⁹ Edgar Allan Poe, ‘Pinakidia’, in *The Works of Edgar Allan Poe*, ed. by John H. Ingram, 4 vols (Edinburgh: Adam and Charles Black, 1875), III, 266-278 (p. 495).

Spirit as well as the New Testament binary between the figures of Adam and Christ. Studying these concepts will facilitate a clearer understanding of theological tropes in Poe's criticism, and the ways in which how Poe constructs identity in general, as well as Poe's conceptualizations of women, which will be discussed in more detail in the succeeding subsection.

To begin with the religious concepts of love, charity and the Holy Spirit, Christian doctrine emphasizes love as the Greek philosophical idea of agape, or preferential love, as opposed to Eros, which connotes sexual intimacy. Agape love is used to describe the boundless love of God, as well as the idea that God *is* love and that 'whoever lives in love lives in union with God and God lives in union with him'.²¹⁰ It is also the term used to describe the love that binds the Christian community.²¹¹ In Christian theology, the highest form of agape love is charity, which stands in for a whole-hearted love awakened and sustained by God's prevenient love for humanity, and whose originating source and ultimate end is God. Charity has a broad denotation that includes: the love of God bestowed on humankind through Christ and the Holy Spirit, the love required of human beings for God, and the disinterested love human beings have for one another, including acts which reach out to sinners or enemies. It is also the wellspring of all religious and moral motivation and the greatest of the virtues because it conjoins one to God and directs one's activities toward eternal happiness so that, as a result, all sin is in some sense a degree of offence against charity.²¹²

The motivating force of charity is the Holy Spirit, the third Person of the Holy Trinity, who works in humanity through one's own voluntary capacities.²¹³ It is through the power of the Holy Spirit that Christ was raised from the dead to gain immortal life; and this same Spirit that transformed Christ's human existence also transforms those who are baptized into the Church. As St. Paul notes, 'If the Spirit of God, who raised Jesus from death, lives in you, then he who raised Christ from death will also give life to your mortal bodies by the presence of his Spirit in you'.²¹⁴ The Holy Spirit is therefore 'at the heart of Christian existence', because it is not only

²¹⁰ Paul J. Wojda, 'Love', in *The Harper Collins Encyclopedia of Catholicism*, ed. by Richard P. McBrien (San Francisco: Harper, 1995), p. 796 (p. 796), 1 John 4. 16.

²¹¹ Wojda, 'Love', p. 796.

²¹² Paul J. Wojda, 'Charity', in *The Harper Collins Encyclopedia of Catholicism*, ed. by Richard P. McBrien (San Francisco: Harper, 1995), pp. 300-301 (p. 301).

²¹³ Wojda, p. 301.

²¹⁴ Romans 8. 11.

the source of Christ's transformed human existence, but the bond of the Christian Church.²¹⁵ Through the Holy Spirit, Christians become baptized into the one body of Christ and the Church, with all being given 'the one Spirit to drink', or, as St. John notes, 'We are sure that we live in union with God and that He lives in union with us, because He has given us His Spirit'.²¹⁶ The Holy Spirit therefore has a communal aspect because it unites the Church to the Holy Trinity and to each other in love and communion of the Holy Spirit. Within this new life humanity becomes 'Spirit-permeated', living 'not in the flesh', but 'in the Spirit'.²¹⁷

While love, charity and the Holy Spirit are defined as the bonds of the Church's body, they are also metaphorically the bonds that make individual bodies complete by raising them to immortality. The effect of the Spirit on the body's integrity can be seen by considering in-depth both St. Paul's distinction between the flesh and Spirit, as well as their soteriological unity. Of particular importance to this consideration are the inter-articulations of Platonism with the dichotomy between the material and divine, and more specifically, the corporeal and spiritual, which characterizes Christian soteriology. The dichotomy between the flesh and the Spirit is connected in the epistles of St. Paul with the central image of the dichotomy of Adam and Christ, which can also be understood as the antonymous binaries of corruptible-incorruptible, natural-spiritual, earthly-heavenly.²¹⁸ For Paul, Adam is associated with corruption, nature and earth because of his originary place in the history of sin and death. In eating from the Tree of Knowledge Adam disobeyed God and introduced sin to the world. As a result of his sin he became guilty of death.²¹⁹ Death is universal because sin is universal. The universality of sin stems from each person's choice to disobey God, a precedent set by Adam's first transgression.²²⁰ Thus, within Pauline Scripture, Adam's story explains the origination of sin and its corollary of death, or as Paul states, 'as by one man, sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned'.²²¹ By living 'in Adam' one

²¹⁵ Mary Ann Fatula, 'Holy Spirit', in *The Modern Catholic Encyclopedia*, ed. by Michael Glazier and Monika K. Hellwig (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1994), pp. 392-399 (p. 392).

²¹⁶ I Corinthians 12. 13, I John 4. 13, Wojda, p. 796.

²¹⁷ I Corinthians 2. 13-15, Romans 8. 9.

²¹⁸ Robin Scroggs, *The Last Adam: A Study in Pauline Anthropology* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1966), p. 94.

²¹⁹ Scroggs, p. 90.

²²⁰ Scroggs, pp. 77-79.

²²¹ Romans 5. 12.

becomes a sinner who not only bears the nature, but the form as well of the fallen first man, the man of death and dust.²²²

Adam, the ‘corruptible man’, is juxtaposed with Christ, who is aligned with life and immortality throughout Paul’s writings.²²³ For example, in Colossians 3. 4 Paul states, ‘Your real life is in Christ and when He appears, then you too will appear with Him and share His glory’, and in Corinthians 15. 45 he says, ‘so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul, the last Adam was made a quickening spirit’. Christ, the ‘Last Adam’, is the ‘life-giving Spirit’, the agent and pattern for the new eschatological humanity. Those who believe in Christ as God’s act rise in a body similar to His, a body of both flesh and spirit, a ‘vile body’ transformed by Christ so that ‘it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body’.²²⁴ In this regard Christ is the ‘first-born of many brethren’, the True Man marking the end of the old era of death and facilitating the original image God laid out for humankind which was forfeited by Adam.²²⁵

Paul’s description of the salvational union of Adam and Christ, or flesh and spirit, utilizes a pattern of earth (flesh) and celestial (spirit) tropes that progresses towards their conflation in the new humanity as a victory over death. In Corinthians 15 Paul poses the questions, ‘How are the dead raised up? And with what body do they come?’²²⁶ The earth imagery in his answer figures death as a necessary precursor to the resurrected spiritual body: calling Christ ‘the first fruits of them that slept’, and drawing an identification between Christ and His believers, Paul states, ‘that which thou sowest [sic] is not quickened except to die. And that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that the body shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat or other grain’. More explicitly, Paul states, ‘It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body’.²²⁷ Paul’s description of the risen body’s new form involves an idiom of star imagery when he states there are ‘celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial; but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial another’, implying the creation of a new ‘celestial’ flesh distinct from the earthly flesh of ‘men’, ‘beasts’, ‘fishes’, and ‘birds’.²²⁸ Paul’s explanation of the terrestrial body’s transformation into a celestial one, and the important distinction between the two types of flesh, is a keystone passage in Pauline-

²²² Scroggs, pp. 84-85, pp. 88-89.

²²³ Romans 1. 23.

²²⁴ Scroggs, pp. 99 and 82. Philippians 3. 21-22.

²²⁵ Scroggs, pp. 93-94.

²²⁶ Corinthians 15. 35.

²²⁷ Corinthians 15. 19, 15. 36-37, 15. 44.

²²⁸ Corinthians 15. 40, 15. 39.

inflected soteriology: ‘The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy; and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. And as we have born the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly’. By bearing ‘the image of the heavenly’ through its conflation with the Spirit the earthy body loses its corruptibility to become celestial and immortal: ‘So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saving that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory’.²²⁹

The syncretistic conjoinment of Paul’s Christology with the Platonic world view can be followed through the Neoplatonic writings of the Church Fathers, particularly the natural theology of St. Augustine. Augustine drew on Neoplatonism to describe the soul’s gradual rise away from material distractions to a union with God, and there is much of the Plato’s influence in Augustine’s search for truth.²³⁰ In Book VIII of *The City of God* Augustine’s intellectual debt to Plato is made plain when he extols the Platonists for approaching ‘nearest’ to Christian beliefs, stating they ‘have recognized the true God as the author of all things, the source of the light of truth, and the bountiful bestower of all blessedness’.²³¹ The Platonists believe God is ‘the cause of existence, the ultimate reason for the understanding, and the end in reference to which the whole life is to be regulated’.²³² For their beliefs, they stand apart from philosophers who suppose ‘the principle of all things to be material’ and whose minds are ‘enslaved to their bodies’.²³³

Yet at the same time Augustine extols Platonic philosophy he also subsumes it to, and makes it serve, Christian doctrine. As Classical cosmology is entwined in the dominating framework and syntax of natural theology it becomes inscribed with Judaeo-Christian meaning. As Augustine explains Platonic philosophy he also naturalizes Christian doctrine and provides its under-riding structure even as he positions Platonism subserviently to carry new Christian connotations. Socrates’s teachings, for example, are remade as referents of the Pauline earth-spirit dichotomy and rubrics on purification from sin to achieve immortality when Augustine emphasizes that the Socratic study of morals is attributable to Socrates’s unwillingness ‘that

²²⁹ Corinthians 15. 47-49, 15. 54.

²³⁰ Ursula King, *Christian Mystics: Their Lives and Legacies Throughout the Ages* (London: Routledge, 2004) pp. 49-50, 53.

²³¹ Aurelius Augustine, *The City of God*, trans. by Rev. Marcus Dods, 2 vols (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1871), I (1871), 319, 313.

²³² *Ibid.*, 311.

²³³ *Ibid.*, 313.

minds defiled with earthly desires should essay to raise themselves upward to divine things'.²³⁴

This implicit corroboration of Christian soteriology continues when Augustine states that the Socratic study of morality is prompted by the mind's desire to discover the 'cause of things', and such causes are 'ultimately reducible to nothing else than the will of the one true and supreme God'. Because of this, the 'cause' can 'only be comprehended by a purified mind'. Socratic diligence given to the 'purification' of life 'by good morals' frees the mind 'from the depressing weight of lusts', and enables it to rise 'upward by its native vigour to eternal things'.²³⁵

Plato's Ideal-material dichotomy easily bears the Pauline struggle between the body and spirit as well. As Augustine explains, the Platonists see 'that no material body is God' and so rise above 'all bodies in seeking for God'. They see 'that whatever is changeable is not the most high God', and therefore transcend 'every soul and all changeable spirits in seeking the supreme'.²³⁶ Part of the process of achieving union with God is through morality, which has similarities to charity. Defined as the 'question concerning the chief good', morality is 'that which will leave us nothing further to seek in order to be blessed, if only we make all our actions refer to it, and seek it not for the sake of something else, but for its own sake'. For this reason it is the beatific 'end', because 'we wish other things on account of it, but itself only for its own sake'.²³⁷ The end of moral study is not found in the mind or in corporeality, but in 'the enjoyment of God', much as 'the eye enjoys light'. It is an enjoyment derived from loving 'the true and highest good', which 'according to Plato, is God, and therefore he would call him a philosopher who loves God; for philosophy is directed to the obtaining of the blessed life, and he who loves God is blessed in the enjoyment of God'.²³⁸

The way the Holy Spirit is depicted as affecting the integrity of the body in Poe's fiction recalls the difference between corruptible and incorruptible bodies in Pauline discourse. Specifically, corruptible bodies lack the sustaining divinity of the Holy Spirit, thereby remaining 'earthly' and, in Poe's fiction, become disarticulate or putrescent. This connection between putrescence and a spiritual lack can be illustrated by way of Mather Byles's *A Discourse on the Present Vileness of the Body, And It's Future Glorious Change by Christ* (1732), which spells out the physical differences between the 'glorious', immortal body and the 'vile', mortal body.

²³⁴ Augustine, I, 308.

²³⁵ *Ibid.*, 309.

²³⁶ *Ibid.*, 314-315.

²³⁷ *Ibid.*, 317.

²³⁸ *Ibid.*, 318.

In his *Discourse* Byles explores of the characterizing question in Pauline scripture, presented as an epigram from Philippians 3.21, ‘Who shall change our vile Body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious Body?’ Like Paul, Byles utilizes the same earth-related and Adamic, as well as celestial and Christic, imagery, and unifies these binaries in the figure of the immortal body fashioned unto Christ’s. However, Byles goes a step beyond Scripture to describe the immortal condition of the *unredeemed* body, making what he terms a ‘short Improvement of the noble Doctrines’.²³⁹ Although no evidence directly connects Poe to Byles, Byles’s sermon on ‘glorious’ and ‘vile’ bodies, coloured as it is by an ‘extravagant gothic tinge’, sheds meaning on the recurrent image of putrescence in Poe’s writings, and for this reason is worth discussion.²⁴⁰

Byles references the Adamic tropes of sin, dust, earth and death to describe the vile body, emphasizing its derivation both etymologically and physically from ‘*Humus*; the *moist ground*; the *Clay*; the *low Earth*’,²⁴¹ and underlining that the human ‘*Body is of the Earth, earthy*’, and that ‘*Dust it is, and to Dust it shall return*’. For Byles, the human form’s original element is ‘mean and despicable’, carrying a ‘Humiliation even in its Origin and Constitution’ and an inherent ‘Vileness’ due to the ‘primitive Materials out of which it was framed’.²⁴² It is a ‘beauteous Arrangement of finer Dust’ fashioned ‘out of the clay’ and ‘abject Earth’, and ‘taken from the common Globe, into which it must quickly fall and resolve again’. Our aspects, ‘flush’d with Health and Beauty’, ‘owe their Existence to the same Clods of Earth which harbour our Brethren, the Worms’, which ‘wait to feast upon the mouldering Carcase; and riot in our wasting Flesh’.²⁴³ ‘Let the Proud Creature look down to the Earth and view the Dust from which he sprung’ says Byles and juxtaposes the sin of pride with a description of the earthy body taken from Genesis, ‘*And the Lord God formed Man out of the Dust of the Ground*’.²⁴⁴ Byles then traces humanity’s earthly constitution to ‘Adam in Paradise and Innocence’, who ‘might in this sacred sense, have own’d a Vile Body’, noting that ‘Original Sin is *communicated* thro the Veins

²³⁹ Mather Byles, *A Discourse on the Present Vileness of the Body, And It’s Future Glorious Change by Christ*, 2nd edn (Boston: Thomas and John Fleet, 1771), p. 19.

²⁴⁰ Paul Giles, *Transatlantic Insurrections: British Culture and the Formation of American Literature, 1730-1860* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001), p. 36.

²⁴¹ Byles, p. 6, Giles, p. 36.

²⁴² Byles, p. 6.

²⁴³ Byles, pp. 6-7.

²⁴⁴ Genesis 2.7 in Byles, p. 6.

of the guilty Parent', and that the 'Spirit which God has infused' into the human form becomes 'depraved and polluted by' the body.²⁴⁵

Tropes of earth and mortality are further illustrated as Death's triumph over the unredeemed corpus: 'A Thousand different Fevers stand ready to seize this Body' proclaims Byles, 'to torment it', 'burn away its Life', 'lick up the finer spirits, and snap the Vital Cord'.²⁴⁶ 'The Face where Beauty now triumphs, will appear cold, and wan, and dismal, rifled by the Hand of Death', and 'the most beauteous, or learned, or pious Head will grin a hideous Skull. Our broken Coffins will shew [sic] nothing but black Bones, and black Mould, and Worms and Filth'.²⁴⁷ Byles asks 'Are these the Cheeks that glow'd so fresh, and bloom'd so lovely? Are these the Lips that smil'd so graceful, and pour'd out such a gliding Stream of Eloquence and Musick?' He answers, 'Lo, the Body is laid in the Dust, and the Worms cover it. Polluted Vermin crawl over every part of the elegant Form' and 'enchanted Face'. The body is 'folded in a winding Sheet' and 'nailed in a black Coffin', where the 'Skin breaks and moulders away; the Flesh drops in Dust from the Bones', the Bones 'are covered with black Mould, and Worms twist about them. The Coffins break, and the Graves sink in, and the disjointed Skelletion [sic] strews the lonely vault'. The once shapely figure leaves 'its Ruins among the Graves', lies 'neglected and forgot', moulders 'away without a Name', and scatters 'among the Elements'.²⁴⁸

Byles's use of the Platonic referents, 'Beauty' and 'Musick', presupposes a human soul in communication with the immortal and ideal, and prefaces an important question for him: if one remains impenitent and foregoes immortality, then what becomes of personal identity bound in totality to the decomposing body? The context for this question can be found in Locke's *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, in which Locke expresses his own eschatological concerns in his amalgamation of the soul with consciousness and personal identity. He states, everyone has 'in himself an immaterial spirit, which is that which thinks in him, and in the constant change of his body keeps him the same; and is that which he calls himself'. Since the soul is the self, 'we may be able, without any difficulty, to conceive the same person at the resurrection, though in a body not exactly in make or parts the same which he had here, the same

²⁴⁵ Byles, p. 7.

²⁴⁶ Byles, p. 8.

²⁴⁷ Byles, p. 9.

²⁴⁸ Byles, p. 10.

consciousness going along with the soul that inhabits it'.²⁴⁹ Byles's anxiety about the annihilation of the soul, and hence consciousness, emerges in the questions that consider its link with its disintegrating shell: "'And were these Bones once living like ours? and must ours be as they?'" This hideous Skull, the frightful Jaw fallen, and the black Teeth naked to the Eye, was it once a thinking Frame, covered with a beauteous Skin?',²⁵⁰

His answer follows two possible tangents. On one hand, the body of earth and clay remains in its deathly state throughout eternity. Byles says to his Christian congregation, God '*shall change OUR vile Body that it may be fashioned like his. Ours; none but ours*'. While the 'Unbeliever and Impenitent' will also be resurrected on the Second Coming, 'how wide the Difference between the one and the other, at the great decisive Day!' The '*feeble Bodies*' of the nonbelievers will be 'changed into Bodies *strong* to bear the Wrath of the Almighty GOD. Their *dying* and *dead* bodies shall be changed into Bodies of an immortal Constitution' and become 'Bodies that must live forever in unsufferable [sic] anguish'. Immortal, but living-in-death, the 'corrupt and filthy' bodies of the nonbelievers 'shall be changed into ten thousand Times more hideous and loathsome Figures: Fit to be Inhabitants of Hell, and Companions for Devils'. Their bodies 'shall be blacken'd in the finish'd Image of the Devil', 'seized and rack'd' with 'Pains and Torments', and 'shall feed the Flames of the horrible Furnace' where the '*darkness of the Grave* shall be changed for *the outer Darkness*'.²⁵¹

On the other hand, the loss of identity – the loss of a Name scattered 'among the Elements' – is prevented by the immortal body given by the Holy Spirit through Christ's salvation. Punning on 'members' of the congregation, and on Christ's human limbs, Byles calls the followers of Christ, 'Members of our Lord JESUS', connecting Christ's resurrection with their own, and he asserts 'GOD shall raise the Dead, by the Man whom he hath ordained, whereof he has given Assurance unto all Men that he raised him from the Dead'.²⁵² The vile body's transformation from the 'STATE of DEATH' and its revival 'from the Condition of Curse and Corruption' are guaranteed despite death's destructive properties: although 'the Worms have feasted themselves upon our Last Dust', explains Byles, 'they shall refund it, and

²⁴⁹ John Locke, 'Of Identity and Diversity', pp. 305-306.

²⁵⁰ Byles, pp. 10-11.

²⁵¹ Byles, p. 19.

²⁵² Byles, p. 12, p. 13, Giles, p. 36.

give back every Attom [sic]: All that really belongs to our numerical Body'.²⁵³ Byles has a specific interest in the way 'Bodies may dissolve, and scatter among the Elements' and how one Element is 'perpetually loosing [sic] it self in another', and this elemental idiom structures the way he describes the body's deterioration and resurrection: 'the invisible Bones may moulder to finer Dust, the Dust may refine to Water, wander in a Cloud, float in a River, or be lost in the wide Sea, and [sic] undistinguished Drop among the Waves. They may be sucked up by the Sun, and fall in a Shower upon the Earth' to flourish in a 'Spire of Grass' or a 'Flower or a Blossom'. Yet though 'our Dust' will 'wander' 'throughout the whole material Creation', 'it shall all at once rush together' on Judgement day 'and start up a compleat [sic] Man'; the 'Dust shall be called together; the Bones shall harden', 'the Joints connect', 'the Sinews shall brace with an immortal Strength', and 'the Skin cover all with everlasting Beauty'.²⁵⁴

The earthy body reformed and made immortal through Christ and the Holy Spirit is then drawn in imagery that recalls fire, light and stars. As Byles explains, a body 'fashioned like unto CHRIST'S' is one that is 'made *splendid* and *illustrious*', just as the 'Body of CHRIST is a shining Body' that 'scatters Light and Glory round about it', and he cites several Scriptural examples to corroborate this description: '*Saul was struck blind, dazzled with the unsufferable [sic] Blaze*' from the 'Body of the Son of GOD'; our bodies will 'put on a shining form; shoot like a Flame from the Grave, and glitter like a Ray of Light up the Ether'; and '*They that be wise, shall shine as the Brightness of the Firmament, and they which turn many to Righteousness, as the Stars for ever and ever*'.²⁵⁵ In addition to fire and celestial tropes, Byles also mentions air and ethereality to describe the resurrected body, again citing Scripture to support his assertions: the body of Christ 'could ascend and descend with equal ease', 'stand aloft in the Air, without any visible Support', 'rise up gradually from the Ground', 'tower away through the upper Skies, to the World above', and Byles adds that all these '*mysterious and astonishing Powers*' will be bestowed on the new eschatological humanity.²⁵⁶

Having now looked at principal Christian definitions of love and spirituality, as well as corporeality as figured against the Pauline dichotomy of Adam and Christ, we can now answer the questions presented at the beginning of this subsection. When Poe asserts Tennyson 'is so

²⁵³ Byles, pp. 13-14.

²⁵⁴ Byles, p. 14.

²⁵⁵ Byles, pp. 15-16, Daniel 12. 3 in Byles, p. 16.

²⁵⁶ Byles, p. 16.

little of the earth, earthy' he makes a negative comparison with Adam and what Adam represents; the inference is that the Beauty of Tennyson's poetry is not only 'soul-elevating' in a Platonic sense, but a Spiritual one as well, with the 'elevating' properties of Tennyson's art implicitly reflecting of the soteriological 'status' of Tennyson's soul. The syncretism between Beauty and the Holy Spirit is suggested again when Poe mentions the 'earthly harp' that strikes notes 'which cannot have been unfamiliar to the angels', with the music, or 'harmony' from the 'earthly' harp metaphoric for 'earthly' humanity's union with Ideality and God; and this idea of a union with God through Beauty is stated again when Poe defines Beauty as 'an ecstatic prescience of the glories beyond the grave', suggesting a 'glorious' immortality gained through the Holy Spirit, with its correlations with love and charity.

The syncretism of Beauty with the Holy Spirit necessitates a transformation of the definition of love; specifically, the uniting power of Eros is sublimated into Christian agape love and charity. This sublimation means that the unifying power of Eros between the lover and beloved is redefined somewhat so that it not only leads to Beauty, but to a union with God; and the idea that love leads to Beauty as well as a union with God organizes Poe's depictions of women. That is, the 'divine majesty' of a woman's love elevates her lover's soul not only through Beauty but through the Holy Spirit, elevating his mortal soul into an immortal one. Within this paradigm, Poe's connection of Adam and Eve with Plato's story about humanity's search for its 'other half' to attain Beauty turns the Genesis creation story into an exemplar for a particular conceptualization of men's relationships with women: Adam, representing the men of clay, is searching for the 'other half' whose love will elevate his soul towards a union with God. With this idealization of women, an identificatory collapse occurs that occludes individual female identity; specifically, women become spiritual reflections of men, or indicators for the male soul's potential to achieve salvation. This spiritual conceptualization of the female body does not entirely originate with Poe, and is derived in part from Neoplatonically-inflected critical theories. The following subsection will discuss these theories put forward by Schlegel, and H.N. Coleridge, and how these theories are illustrated in Baron Friedrich Heinrich Karl de la Motte Fouqué's *Undine*, in order to lend greater clarity to Poe's depictions of women.

‘The Mirror of God’: Neoplatonic Figurations of Women.

The discussion of women as spiritual aspects of the male self can be methodologically framed by ideas put forward by Frederick Goldin in *The Mirror of Narcissus in the Courtly Love Lyric* (1967). In his book, Goldin outlines a model of courtly love in which the lady is the knight’s reflection of spiritual interiority. Goldin’s model of medieval courtly love lyric is based on the medieval concept of the mirror, in which its reflection is one of Platonic Ideality, and which can be consulted in order to know what one is and what one ought to be.²⁵⁷ This Mirror of Ideality partially derives from a theological idea that the soul is a Mirror of God that must remain ‘pure’, because one ‘cannot get images’ from a ‘soiled mirror’, ‘nor can the soul that is filled with worldly cares and over which the flesh spreads darkness receive the illumination of the Holy Spirit’.²⁵⁸ As a reflection of Ideality, the ‘Mirror of God’, served a particular political and philosophical function for the medieval noble classes by justifying their earthly society as a reflection of the heavenly community of God attended by his angels. By peering into the Mirror of God a nobleman could find the certainty of his personal worth. But how could he be certain he deserved the wealth and privilege of his high class, and how could he be sure of his membership of that class, despite his deeds and acts?²⁵⁹

The idealized lady gave the knight this certainty. She saved him from the torture of an indefinite and unattainable idealized self-image by embodying that image herself.²⁶⁰ In her, the knight found values that were unchanging and enduring, that existed before he discovered them, even before the existence of the lady, in whom they are embodied to perfection. As an arbiter of virtue, the rewards of her favour marked a publically recognizable moral progress, thereby signifying the courtly man’s earthly salvation.²⁶¹ The lady is what the courtly man can never be, but what he wants to become and longs to aspire to.²⁶² Basically, the lady is the knight’s own image perfected, his own form enhanced by courtly grace and virtue. Goldin states, ‘As the knight believed the lady was a mirror of perfection, so he believed that in casting his own image in that mirror he would be united with the ideal, the light of the world, the living form of Beauty.

²⁵⁷ Frederick Goldin, *The Mirror of Narcissus in the Courtly Love Lyric* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1967), p. 4.

²⁵⁸ St. Basil of Caesarea in Goldin, pp. 5-6.

²⁵⁹ Goldin, pp. 66-67.

²⁶⁰ Goldin, p. 68.

²⁶¹ Goldin, p. 79.

²⁶² Goldin, p. 75.

She was to be his hope, a mediator between himself and something imperious and impossible'.²⁶³ Courtly love began with the idealized image of the knight's own perfection, an image which later took on the form of an honoured lady.²⁶⁴

The idea that the female body reflects the idealized male self can be expanded on by examining two works of critical theory that Poe was familiar with: Augustus Wilhelm Schlegel's *The Course of Lectures on Dramatic Art and Literature* (1803) and H. N. Coleridge's *Introduction to the Greek Classic Poets* (1830). Schlegel's work was based on lectures given in Vienna in 1808, and was originally published in German between 1809 and 1811. Since Poe could not understand German he most likely read John Black's English translation of the *Lectures* published in London in 1815 and Philadelphia in 1833. Schlegel is particularly instrumental to the formulation of Poe's own aesthetic ideas, and the intellectual debt Poe owes to Schlegel has never been disputed, partly because Poe's appreciation of Schlegel's theories is well documented. As Burton Pollin points out, nine of Poe's 'Pinakidia' entries liberally quote the *Lectures*, and many of Poe's literary borrowings from Schlegel often border on plagiarism.²⁶⁵ Schlegel constructs such a relationship between men and women characterized by the Mirror of Ideality in his own description of the Chivalrous spirit as a 'new and purer spirit of love, an inspired homage for genuine female worth' that reveres women as 'the pinnacle of humanity' and enjoins them to religion 'under the image of a virgin mother' who infuses 'into all hearts a sentiment of unalloyed goodness'. Standing in relation to the revered woman and Chivalrous spirit is the chivalrous man, in whom Christianity claims 'a dominion over the whole inward man and the most hidden movements of the heart', whose 'moral independence' and prescribed 'laws of honour' motivate him to self-sacrificing deeds, and who consecrates 'unconditionally certain principals of action, as truths elevated beyond all the investigation of casuistical reasoning'.²⁶⁶ Schlegel's portrait of the courtly romance involves an interplay between internality and externality – between the 'inwardness' of an integrally Christian man and the outward 'image of a virgin mother' who compels his moral progress through chivalrous acts. The characteristic and significant detail in this interplay is the synonymisation of women with the 'virgin mother',

²⁶³ Goldin, pp. 97-98.

²⁶⁴ Goldin, p. 105.

²⁶⁵ Burton Pollin, *The German Face of Edgar Allan Poe* (Columbia: Camden House, 1995), pp. 91-92.

²⁶⁶ Augustus William Schlegel, *A Course of Lectures on Dramatic Art and Literature*, trans. by John Black, 2 vols (Edinburgh: William Blackwood, 1815), I (1815), 14.

which immediately figures the female image with spiritual properties. Indeed, Schlegel even describes women in salvational terms: they infuse men's hearts with 'unalloyed goodness', and enable Christianity to claim the 'inward man', motivating him to achieve a 'truth' 'elevated' beyond all 'casuistical reasoning'. Uniting the Christian man with his 'inward' reflection is the Chivalrous spirit, which has connotations of the Holy Spirit as a 'purer spirit of love'. Basically, Schlegel rewrites the courtly romance as a metaphor for the male soul elevated by his love for an idealized woman, with the love being an agape love associated with the Holy Spirit. Women in this paradigm are doubly 'identity-less', with all falling 'under the image of a virgin mother', yet at the same time signifying male interiority in that they serve as the prompts that enable Christianity to claim the 'inward man'.

The soul-elevating union between men and women is outlined again in the *Introduction to the Greek Classic Poets* by Henry Nelson Coleridge, who also writes this relationship as the union between Platonism and Christianity, with the former representing the flesh and the latter representing the Spirit.²⁶⁷ Coleridge relegates the 'ancient' arts, considering them 'Pagan', grounded in 'sensual theory', and marked by the 'passion of Appetite'. While he admits a union between the ancient and modern – or Pagan and Christian – theories he firmly places the agency for spiritual salvation with writings influenced by Christian thought, which he associates with the 'passion of Affection'. This distinction between Appetite and Affection, and their union to create Beauty, is drawn in Coleridge's brief history of the evolution of the literature of love from Plato to Shakespeare. Beginning with Plato, Coleridge explains that while Platonic love is 'indeed a high and noble effort of pure imagination', its 'reciprocal appetency of spirits, springing from a predestined and immovable sympathy, was not the human love which could be sung upon the lyre'. In the middle stage of the history of the love poem, represented by Petrarch and the minor pieces of Dante, 'the love had become human' even though it remained 'uninspired by any real passion'. This imperfect improvement on the love lyric is due to the fact that Petrarch is unable to unite the two 'modes of thinking and feeling into one action of the heart': he is 'passionate here, metaphysical there', but unable to combine the two modes, to 'Platonize, as it were, humanity, and to humanize Platonism'. The perfecting of the theory of love is attributed to the English poets. The works of Spenser and Shakespeare express 'that

²⁶⁷ Jacquelyne Doyle, '(Dis)figuring Woman: Edgar Allan Poe's "Berenice"', *Poe Studies / Dark Romanticism*, 24 (1991), 13-21 (p. 14).

exquisite intermingling of philosophy, passion, and domestic fondness, which we all feel at once to be the true desideratum of the virtuous mind, and believe to be the best earthly consummation of our imperfect nature'. In this domestic union the 'spirit is loved for itself alone' because 'it is loved through the medium of the purified passions'; and Coleridge quotes a passage from the *Symposium* for corroboration, 'Itself alone by itself, eternally one and single', another translation of Plato's description of the Beautiful, 'alone by itself and with itself, always being of a single form'. In other words, divinity is realized through the union of marriage, which may also be understood as the union between Platonism and Christianity, or between the earthly and spiritual – or as Coleridge states: 'Beauty is the virtue of the Body, as Virtue is the Beauty of the mind, and that Love is imperfect which affects to reject either the one or the other'.²⁶⁸

Coleridge's depiction of love as corollary to Beauty easily harks to the Platonic ladder of erotics in which Eros compels the lover toward his beloved in a union that progresses towards the Beautiful. An important distinction though is that Coleridge writes Plato's erotics within the context of Christian-sanctioned marriage, thereby inscribing it with Christian meaning and history, even though a history abridged towards his own literary theory. Defining marriage as an 'indissoluble' bond that declares women 'equal objects of its precepts and joint-heirs of its promises', and acknowledges 'love and care' as the 'rights of a Christian wife at the hands of a husband', Coleridge attributes the 'gentle' yet 'almost despotic empire' the 'fairer sex' 'exercises over the stronger' to Christian chivalry. He explains that although the 'barbarism' and 'corrupting priesthood' of the dark ages destroyed a great deal of the 'mysterious dignity' which the Gospels conferred on women, Christian sentiments of marriage were revived in the Crusades, 'never thenceforth to be obscured but in an eclipse of Christian civilization itself'. This revival of marriage was due to the emergence of the Chivalry, whose duty was not only to 'defend the weak in all cases', but to 'relieve, at any hazard, a woman from difficulty, and to protect her from danger or insult at the expense of his life'. Hence, the courtesy and dignified submission to women begun with the knight and inherited by his successor, the gentleman, grew out of the reverential attention to women, the same reverence that produces 'that more august conception of the wedded union'. When this 'dignified submission' becomes 'kindled into passion for some one in particular' it is transformed into 'the sacred and enlivening flame, by which every faculty

²⁶⁸ Henry Nelson Coleridge, *Introduction to the Study of the Greek Classic Poets Designed Principally For the Use of Young Persons at School and College* (London: John Murray, 1830), pp. 31-32.

of the mind is developed, every affection of the heart purified, and which alone can promise happiness on earth, by a satisfaction of the instinctive appetite in the light and under the sanction of a spiritual union'.²⁶⁹ In other words, the marital union is 'soul-elevating' for the husband in a way that recalls Platonic Beauty. Yet even while Coleridge's structure is Platonic his language ascribes immortality to Christian doctrine: the 'mysterious dignity' conferred by the Gospels, the 'enlivening flame', the 'light', the 'spiritual union', are all part of the idiom of the Holy Spirit as well. They are also Coleridge's referents to women and therefore also figure women's love as an agency for male salvation. The marital union of man and woman is therefore akin to the soteriological union of flesh and Spirit.

The ideas that love is an aspect of the Holy Spirit that can elevate the soul to immortality and a union with God, and that one's 'other half' is an indicator of the soul's potential to reach salvation as a reflection of spiritual interiority can be illustrated in another work that is influential to Poe's literature, Fouqué's *Undine*. Originally printed in German in 1811, English prose translations were published in 1818, 1830, and 1839, and reprinted in 1824, 1840, 1844, and 1845.²⁷⁰ Burton Pollin states that '*Undine* provided Poe with a rather inconveniently small and frail peg on which to hang several of his favourite principles in literary criticism'; yet I would argue that Poe's extolment of *Undine* is reflective of the way Fouqué's novel displays many of the Neoplatonic ideals Poe subscribes to, and thereby speaks to something more fundamental than Pollin suggests.²⁷¹ Poe writes highly of *Undine* in his review of an 1839 translation, relating it back to American literary identity, and praising its theological themes. For Poe, the republication of *Undine*, 'in the very teeth of our anti-romantic national character, is an experiment well adapted to excite interest', and that during the 'crisis caused by this experiment' it is the 'duty of every lover of literature to speak out, and speak boldly, against the untenable prejudices which have so long and so unopposedly enthralled us'. Poe calls on such romantic readers 'to make head, by all admissible means in his power, against that evil genius of mere matter-of-fact', and asks them to 'make use of a careful analysis of the work itself' 'with a view of impressing upon the public mind at least his individual sense of its most exalted and

²⁶⁹ H.N. Coleridge, pp. 29-30.

²⁷⁰ Burton R. Pollin, '*Undine* in the Works of Poe', *Studies in Romanticism*, 14 (1975), 59-74 (pp. 60-61).

²⁷¹ Pollin, '*Undine*', p. 69.

extraordinary character'.²⁷² Writing about the story itself, Poe states that a 'mystic or under current of meaning, of the simplest and most easily intelligible, yet of the most richly philosophical character' inflects Fouqué's work, and that '*Undine* is a model of models, in regard to the high artistical talent which it evinces', with 'various beauties' and an 'absolute' 'unity'.²⁷³ Speaking on the novel's religious themes, Poe points out 'the rapturous death of Sir Huldbrand in the embraces of his spiritual wife' and asks, 'What can be more divine than the character of the soulless Undine? – what more august than her transition into the soul-possessing wife? What can be more intensely beautiful than the whole book'?²⁷⁴ Examining *Undine* will not only shed light on the way Poe writes women as spiritual reflections of men, but enable interpretive leverage into his colonial-themed stories as well.

A detailed analysis of *Undine* is outside the scope of this thesis; however, a brief synopsis of *Undine* will outline its tropes relevant to this chapter. The story of *Undine* begins with the arrival of a knight, named Sir Huldbrand, to the cottage of an elderly Fisherman, who lives on a secluded peninsula separated from the outside world by a haunted forest. The Fisherman offers Huldbrand shelter for the night, and during his stay a storm arises, which creates a flood that prevents the knight from leaving back through the forest. The Fisherman and his wife introduce Huldbrand to Undine, their adopted daughter, who was found after their original daughter disappeared. Huldbrand and Undine fall in love, and by chance an elderly priest, Father Heilman, gets ship-wrecked onto the shore of the peninsula just in time to marry the young couple. After their marriage Undine tells Huldbrand that she is of a race of 'water-spirits' that are human beings in 'outward nature', but are 'coupled' with a 'great evil'; that is, the water spirits 'moulder and pass away, soul and body' after death, so that while human beings 'wake to a purer life', the water-spirits 'remain where the sand, and the flint, and the wind and the wave, remain'. However, Undine can gain a soul through 'the most intimate connexion of love with a being of the earth'.²⁷⁵

²⁷² Edgar Allan Poe, 'Undine: A Miniature Romance; From the German of Baron de la Motte Fouqué. Colman's Library of Romance, Edited by Grenville Mellen. Samuel Colman, New York', in *The Complete Works of Edgar Allan Poe*, ed. by James A. Harrison, 17 vols (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell & Company, 1902), x, 30-39 (pp. 30-31).

²⁷³ Poe, 'Undine', p. 35, p. 37.

²⁷⁴ Poe, 'Undine', p. 39.

²⁷⁵ *Undine, A Romance. Translated from the German*, trans. by George Soane (London: W. Simpkin, and R. Marshall, 1818), pp. 89-90.

After the marriage the storm clears, and Huldbrand, Undine, and Father Heilman leave the peninsula through the haunted forest. While in the forest they briefly encounter Undine's uncle, Kuhleborn, a powerful water-spirit who can transform from human shape into a body of water. On the other side of the forest Huldbrand and Undine meet Bertalda, the princess of a kingdom. Eventually it is revealed that Bertalda is the Fisherman's original daughter whose place was taken by Undine. Bertalda, Huldbrand, and Undine travel to Huldbrand's castle, Ringstetten, which quickly becomes haunted by Kuhleborn through a courtyard well that Undine must seal up to prevent his returning. While at Ringstetten, Bertalda and Huldbrand fall in love, and in a heated moment Huldbrand shuns his wife, causing the water-spirits to reclaim her. Before she leaves, Undine warns Huldbrand to remain faithful to their wedding vows or she will not be able to protect her from Kuhleborn. Huldbrand and Bertalda decide to marry anyway, but just before the wedding night Bertalda orders the well to be reopened so she can get its purifying water to remove her freckles. Undine rises from the well, locates Huldbrand, and kills him.

Drawn with Platonic elemental imagery, the organizing trope of *Undine* is the human soul's elevation through love, particularly the love associated with the Holy Spirit which also creates a union with God. The union of earth and Spirit is suggested with slight melodrama in *Undine*'s initial scene, when the 'green earth' of the peninsula extends 'far into a large lake', so that 'the land seem[s] to have forced itself into the water from affection to the clear, blue, shining stream; while the water with loving arms grasp[s] after the delicious fields'.²⁷⁶ The imagery of earth and water easily recalls the Platonic elements, with water being an intermediary to the divine element of fire, so that the scene is metaphoric not only for a union compelled by Eros leading to Beauty, but also of love leading to a union with God. This imagery is repeated somewhat in the novel's final scene as well in a parallel between Undine and Huldbrand, as a spring bursts from the ground where the spirit of Undine stands and spreads to surround Huldbrand's grave.²⁷⁷

The theme of the soul's elevation through a union of love is drawn straight-forwardly in Fouqué's novel through the transformation of Undine's mortal soul into an immortal as brought about by her marriage to Huldbrand. As cited above, this transformation is stated explicitly, but is also suggested through a dispositional change. Previous to her marriage Undine is described

²⁷⁶ *Undine*, p. 1.

²⁷⁷ *Undine*, p. 205.

as wearying to ‘the patience of Job’, and her opinions prompt the Fisherman to upbraid her with the statement, ‘That sounds as if Turks and heathens had brought you up’.²⁷⁸ During the marriage ceremony Undine mocks ‘the bride-groom and her foster-parents, and even the reverend priest’, and when Father Heilman instructs Undine to ‘attune’ her ‘soul’ so ‘that it may harmonize with the soul of’ her ‘bridegroom’, Undine responds, ‘But if one happens to have no soul? – What then, pray you, becomes of your tuning’?²⁷⁹ Following the wedding night, Undine’s behaviour is altered in accordance with her new soul-bearing condition: she implores the priest in ‘humble words’ for ‘his pardon for her follies’ and entreats ‘him to pray for the welfare of her soul’; she is ‘still, friendly, cautious’, her behaviour that of a ‘mother of a family’ as well as ‘a tender bashful being’; and she gazes at her husband with looks that convey ‘a whole heaven of love and modest devotion’. Father Heilman comments on her changed condition as well, stating, ‘the heavenly goodness yesterday gave to you a treasure by the hands of me, unworthy – use it as it should be used, so will it advance your earthly as your eternal welfare’.²⁸⁰

Juxtaposing Undine’s transformation from a soulless to soul-bearing state are her uncle Kuhleborn, and her rival, Bertalda. Characteristically associated with the colour white, as a ‘tall white figure’ with a ‘body as white’ as foam, and ‘of gigantic dimensions’, Kuhleborn’s colour and stature recall the Bible’s several depictions of divine reification, lending him spiritual connotations.²⁸¹ At the same time, though, Kuhleborn is also described as ‘a soulless spirit formed of the elements, a creature of the outer world, insensible to feelings of the world within’.²⁸² Basically, Kuhleborn represents the earth-bound, unredeemed and mortal human soul. This soulless, and loveless, state of being insensible to the ‘feelings of the world within’ is outlined in Kuhleborn’s comparisons with Huldbrand, the Fisherman, and Father Heilman, the agents of charity who serve to help Undine realize her immortality. Upon Huldbrand’s arrival at the cottage, he is initially mistaken by the Fisherman to be ‘the image of a tall, gigantic being, white as snow, who unceasingly’ nods ‘with his head after a strange fashion’.²⁸³ A parallel between Kuhleborn and the Fisherman is made as well in a scene emblematic of salvation: the Fisherman reaches out over a flooding stream to Undine, who is caught on an island, and, as he

²⁷⁸ *Undine*, p. 9, p. 58.

²⁷⁹ *Undine*, pp. 73-75.

²⁸⁰ *Undine*, pp. 82-85.

²⁸¹ *Undine*, p. 47, p. 133.

²⁸² *Undine*, pp. 139-140.

²⁸³ *Undine*, p. 3.

does so, his 'white hairs fall strangely over his face', reminding Huldbrand of 'the white man in the forest'.²⁸⁴ Like the 'fishers of men' ordained by Christ to redeem souls by spreading the Gospels, the Fisherman reaches across the water, offering the charity that could lift Undine from her mortal state to a 'purer life'.²⁸⁵ The series of juxtapositions continues in relation to Father Heilman, who is described as having a 'white beard' and 'whiter locks on the crown of his head', but who also embodies the union between flesh and spirit, as indicated when he says, 'I am no earthly spirit, though, indeed, a spirit that yet dwells in the earthly body'.²⁸⁶ In contrast, Kuhleborn wears garments that are 'almost the same as the monk's' 'white habit of his order', but has no immortal soul, as indicated in his statement, 'I know nothing of penance, and indeed fancy I have no particular occasion for it'.²⁸⁷

Like Kuhleborn, Bertalda also stands in contrast to Undine as a soulless entity: Undine doubts Bertalda's possession of a soul when she asks her, 'Have you then a soul? – Have you really then a soul?'; inversely, Bertalda wonders how Huldbrand can love one who is 'rather a spirit than a human being', implying her own love lacks a spiritual aspect; and most tellingly, Bertalda's beauty is maintained with water from the well haunted by Kuhleborn, which makes 'fair the skin and' lends 'a charm to her beauty'.²⁸⁸ Basically, Bertalda embodies a Pandemian love, and, in accordance with H.N. Coleridge's terminology, instantiates Beauty within a purely 'sensual theory', unaffiliated with the elevating powers of Holy Spirit. In this regard, her love for Huldbrand is not 'soul-elevating', as implied when Huldbrand rescues Bertalda from the 'Black Valley'. While searching for Bertalda in the 'thick gloom', Huldbrand spots 'something white, shining through the branches'; but, as he draws closer to the 'white figure', he sees 'lying close before him a horrid, disgusting face', and hears a 'hoarse voice' say, 'Give me a kiss beloved one' before realizing the white figure is Kuhleborn.²⁸⁹ A similar situation occurs when Bertalda and Huldbrand are sitting in a wagon. Just as Bertalda makes known her love for Huldbrand, the couple find themselves in 'the middle of a foaming river', see that the wagon and horses have 'melted and foamed away into the water that boiled up around them', and discover that the carter

²⁸⁴ *Undine*, pp. 32-33.

²⁸⁵ Matthew 4. 19, *Undine*, p. 34.

²⁸⁶ *Undine*, p. 62.

²⁸⁷ *Undine*, pp. 95-96.

²⁸⁸ *Undine*, p. 130, p. 117, p. 136.

²⁸⁹ *Undine*, pp. 148-150.

is actually Kuhleborn, who rises ‘up like a tower’ of water to ‘bury them in destruction’.²⁹⁰ The appearance of Kuhleborn at important moments of Bertalda’s relationship with Huldbrand dramatically illustrates that her love for Huldbrand will leave his soul mortal, in a state similar to that of Kuhleborn.

Undine, in contrast to Bertalda, is drawn as Huldbrand’s proper spiritual counterpart when she rescues Huldbrand from the Black Valley; and this rescue from death metaphorically implies that she also elevates his soul above mortality, due to the fact that her love is the same that is associated with the Holy Spirit and union with God. The spiritual connection between Undine and Huldbrand is emphasized as well in a dream in which Huldbrand sees Undine explaining to Kuhleborn, ‘the soul that was given to me on earth has not yet departed from me’, and then hears ‘a voice of music’, suggesting his harmony with his Platonic soul and that he is in contact with his own ‘sphere’.²⁹¹ Undine’s spiritual associations are drawn further when she emerges, spirit-like, from the haunted well as ‘a female figure clad in white, with a veil of the same colour depending from her hand’.²⁹² That Huldbrand’s marriage to Undine represents a conflation of the flesh and Spirit is suggested when, just before his wedding night with Bertalda he says, ‘I must into the wedding-bed’, to which the spirit of Undine replies, ‘You must indeed, but into a dark, cold bed’.²⁹³ In this instance, the union of the wedding bed is correlated with a union with the Spirit; and this spiritual aspect is emphasized when Undine smiles ‘in all her beauty’ and kisses Huldbrand with a ‘heavenly kiss’ before she kills him.²⁹⁴ Finally, Undine’s instantiation of Huldbrand’s soul is suggested when her spirit appears as ‘a snow-white figure, closely veiled’, raising her ‘hands to Heaven in deep and murmured lamentation’, and walking behind Huldbrand’s funeral procession.²⁹⁵

In his review of *Undine* Poe states that ‘the mere death of a beloved wife does not imply a final separation so complete as to justify an union with another’.²⁹⁶ For Poe, *Undine* was more than just a ‘frail peg’ upon which to hang his literary theories; it expressed a Neoplatonic tradition that Poe saw himself as part of. *Undine*, like the criticism of Schlegel and H.N. Coleridge, fleshes out many of the Neoplatonic essentialities and assurances that Poe subscribes

²⁹⁰ *Undine*, pp. 159-162.

²⁹¹ *Undine*, p. 187.

²⁹² *Undine*, p. 196.

²⁹³ *Undine*, p. 198.

²⁹⁴ *Undine*, p. 200.

²⁹⁵ *Undine*, p. 203.

²⁹⁶ Poe, ‘Undine’, p. 36.

to, particularly that love is appurtenant of the Holy Spirit, that it brings one in union with God, and that men search for their ‘other halves’ who can provide this love and immortalize their souls. This idealization of women is partially built on an identificatory collapse as they come to serve as reflections for the male soul, or as Mirrors of Ideality. We can see how these ideas are enacted in Poe’s tales, particularly in relation to what Poe sees as ‘faulty’ epistemologies. Specifically, Poe criticizes knowledge systems that attempt to subordinate Ideality and the Spirit to mensuration. For Poe, such epistemologies create false knowledge systems that attempt to encompass Spirituality and subsume it to representation. By doing so, these same epistemologies preclude any actual Absolutes, thereby preventing a union with God. Two ways in which Poe illustrates the detrimental effect of false knowledge systems on the soul are through the logic of monomania, and through depictions of women as reflections of male essentiality, with their bodily conditions reflecting the effects of false knowledge on Poe’s male narrators. The following subsection will discuss how Poe’s tale, ‘Berenice’, enacts this correlation between the female body and epistemology.

The Devil in the Discourse: Monomania and Egaeus’s Library

A misrecognition is established at the outset of ‘Berenice’ when Poe’s narrator, Egaeus, sees a rainbow – symbolic of God’s covenant with Noah to never again destroy the world with flood – as a trope for the ‘wretchedness of earth’, thereby transforming a ‘covenant of peace’ and salvation into a ‘simile for sorrow’.²⁹⁷ The act of tropically tying an emblem of the Spirit to the ‘wretchedness of earth’ is appurtenant of a knowledge system that collapses the spiritual and abstract into the material and representable, effectively nullifying the spiritual ‘realm’. In essence, Poe draws Egaeus – and several of his first-person narrators – as writing and experiencing from within an epistemology that allows for an inkling of ‘something beyond’, but only realizing this ‘shadow’ of rationality through material and empirical means. This conflation of the spiritual and material, and its Providential implications, underpin not only Poe’s ‘married women’ stories, such as ‘Berenice’, but his tales of colonial contact as well. In ‘Berenice’ the

²⁹⁷ Edgar Allan Poe, ‘Berenice’, in *The Portable Edgar Allan Poe*, ed. by J. Gerald Kennedy (Penguin: New York, 2006), pp. 97-104 (p. 99). Thomas Ollive Mabbott, Notes to ‘Berenice’, in *Collected Works of Edgar Allan Poe. Tales and Sketches. 1831-1842*, ed. by Thomas Ollive Mabbott, 3 vols (London: Belknap Press, 1978), pp. 219-221 (p. 219).

subservience of spirituality to representation and materiality is limned in the tale's two central tropes: Egaeus's disease of the mind, and the library with its 'very peculiar' contents. While the works in the library allude to Neoplatonic, soteriological concerns, 'monomania' references a series of discourses and tropes that explain Egaeus's emotional apathy and obsession while pointing to a disjuncture between epistemology and a Neoplatonic teleology that underpins the tale's domestic violence. In order to understand this disjuncture and how it pertains to identity in 'Berenice', it will be useful to provide a brief discussion of monomania before analysing the works of Egaeus's library.

'Monomania', Egaeus's mental disorder, was a psychiatric disorder 'discovered', or more properly, conceptualized, in the early nineteenth century. F.J.V. Broussais's *On Irritation and Insanity* (1831), and the *Cyclopaedia of Practical Medicine* (1833), edited by John Forbes, Alexander Tweedie and John Conolly both explain symptoms and causes of monomania and share contemporaneity with 'Berenice's' original publication.²⁹⁸ For Broussais, monomania, or 'chronic partial mania', signifies a period of madness in which 'the greater part of insane persons are governed by one predominant idea, or by a series of ideas', yet still 'understand reasoning upon most other subjects, when they are not under the influence of morbid agitation'.²⁹⁹ Amongst the various types of monomania Broussais classifies as 'perversions' is the 'perversion of the instinctive want of associating with other men', its central symptom being the inability to form emotional attachments with significant others, such as spouses or close relatives. In comparison, Broussais explains that in its 'lighter degree' the perverted instinct for human association 'produces moroseness, impatience, and hatred towards certain persons', while its 'middle' stages produce insane men and women 'who are in despair, that they cannot love their husbands or wives – their children – their relations' yet still have the presence of mind to

²⁹⁸ Both works are written for a professional psychiatric audience. Dain points out that while few 'layman's' books on psychiatry were written before 1865, an intelligent person could access and master most psychiatric theories during this time via professional literature and leading general periodicals. Well over a hundred article and book reviews concerning mental illness appeared in prominent American magazines during Poe's time, including the *North American Review*, *Littell's Living Age*, *Eclectic Magazine*, and the *Museum of Foreign Literature, Science, and Art*, all of which were printed in northern cities and which Poe would have been familiar with. Norman Dain, *Concepts of Insanity in the United States, 1789-1865* (New Jersey: Rutgers, 1964) p. 166.

²⁹⁹ Broussais, F.J.V., *On Irritation and Insanity. A Work, Wherein the Relation of the Physical with the Moral Condition of Man, are Established on the Basis of Physiological Medicine*, (Columbia: J.M. Morris, 1831), p. 193.

condemn and grieve at ‘these sentiments of aversion for their fellow-creatures’. Its latter stages transform emotional aversion into violence, as those who abandon themselves to the destructive inclination ‘invent pretexts to justify their atrocities; sometimes it is a voice that directs assassination – sometimes it is God himself: some have believed they had a commission to save mankind by the baptism of blood; others pretend to secure the salvation of their children, and to make angels of them, by cutting their throats’. Apathy turns into cruelty ‘and the inclination to destroy’, and compels ‘an impulse not founded on reflection, and condemned by the persons subjected to it – an impulse that tempts’ the insane persons ‘to inflict pain, or even death, on those whom they love the most’. After the murder has been committed, the maniac will ‘coldly contemplate’ the victim, or occupy himself ‘about something else, according to the kind of delirium which coincides with’ his ‘murderous monomania’.³⁰⁰

The connection between emotional disjuncture and insanity is also made by the *Cyclopaedia*, which distinguishes ‘moral insanity’ from monomania, defining the former as ‘a morbid perversion of the natural feelings, affections, inclinations, temper, habits and moral dispositions, without any notable lesion of the intellect or knowing and reasoning faculties’, and the latter as moral insanity attended by hallucination, with the recognition that moral insanity tends to ‘degenerate into, or ultimately assume, the character of monomania’.³⁰¹ The *Cyclopaedia*’s definition of moral insanity is corroborated by way of reference to Esquirol, who explains how insane persons avoid those ‘who are most dear to them’ and ‘revile them, ill-treat them, anxiously shun them’. In fact, ‘moral alienation is so constant’ amongst the insane that it appears ‘to be the proper characteristic of mental derangement’, and while not all madmen experience hallucinations, ‘there are none in whom the passions and moral affections are not disordered, perverted, or destroyed’. The return ‘to the proper and natural state of the moral affections’, signified by the ‘tears of sensibility’, the desire to see ‘once more children or friends’, or the wish to open one’s heart ‘and return into the bosom of’ one’s family, indicates insanity’s approaching cure.³⁰²

³⁰⁰ Broussais, pp. 195-196.

³⁰¹ *The Cyclopaedia of Practical Medicine; Comprising Treatises on the Nature and Treatment of Diseases, Materia Medica and Therapeutics, Medical Jurisprudence, Etc., Etc.* ed. by John Forbes, Alexander Tweetie, John Connolly in 4 vols (London: Sherwood, Gilbert, and Piper, and Baldwin and Cradock, 1833) II, pp. 12 and 20.

³⁰² Esquirol in *Cyclopaedia*, p. 12.

A theological strand is tied into monomania's symptoms through the rejection of love, and the way this rejection gradients into violence accompanied by religious visions. The voices from God, baptisms of blood, assurances of salvation by way of murder all gesture toward their underpinning theology – a theology further brought to light when considering other monomaniacal behaviors: the morally insane act 'as if actually possessed by the demon of evil'; the monomaniacs 'of gaiety' 'believe themselves already in possession of a spiritual world'; and those who suffer from the 'monomania founded on self-dissatisfaction' believe 'they are 'objects of divine wrath, pursued by Satan, or having him dwelling in them, or that they are plunged into the burning lake'.³⁰³

Partial cause for the permeation of psychoanalytic discourse with theology is monomania's link with the older concept of melancholia. *On Irritation and Insanity* and the *Cyclopaedia* both note this connection, calling partial mania 'the melancholy of the ancients' and stating that 'cases of partial insanity have been by former writers distinguished by the term melancholia'.³⁰⁴ One definition of melancholia that enables us to tap into the theological undercurrents of *On Irritation and Insanity*, the *Cyclopaedia*, and, most importantly, 'Berenice', is found in Robert Burton's *The Anatomy of Melancholy*. While Poe's familiarity with Burton's work is speculative, an argument for acquaintance can be made through his 'Berenice' reference to Caelius Secundus Curio's *de Amplitudine Beati Regni Dei*.³⁰⁵ Curio's treatise itself is rare enough that the chances of Poe's having had access to it are slight; however its explication is found under the 'Religious Melancholy' section of Burton's work, and the wider publication of *The Anatomy of Melancholy* makes Poe's knowledge of this explication more probable. We can trace the strong concatenations between religious melancholy and monomania by considering the specifics of the former's symptoms and causes.

For Burton, those who suffer under religious melancholy, 'are spiritually sicke, void of reason', almost 'overborne by their miseries', and with 'too deepe an apprehension of their sinnes' to 'apply themselves to good counsel' or to 'pray, believe, repent'.³⁰⁶ Their spiritual sickness follows from a belief in their enormity of offence, the 'intolerable burden of their sins',

³⁰³ *Cyclopaedia*, p. 15. Broussais, pp. 201, 199, 200.

³⁰⁴ Broussais, p. 193. *Cyclopaedia*, p. 19.

³⁰⁵ Poe, 'Berenice', in *The Portable Edgar Allan Poe*, ed. by J. Gerald Kennedy (London: Penguin, 2006) pp. 97-104 (p. 100).

³⁰⁶ Robert Burton, *The Anatomy of Melancholy*, ed. by Thomas C. Faulkner, Nicolas K. Kiessling, Rhonda L. Blair, in 3 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), III, p. 426.

and God's 'heavy wrath' and 'displeasure so deeply apprehended, that they account themselves reprobates, quite forsaken of God, already damned, past all hope of grace, incapable of mercy', and that their transgressions are so great 'they cannot be forgiven'.³⁰⁷ These feelings of inevitable perdition are instantiated by corresponding delusions: the victims suffer 'the paines of hell' more than 'possibly can be expressed'; 'they smell brimstone, talke familiarly with divells, heare and see *Chimeraes*, prodigious uncouth shapes, beares, Owles, Anticks, blacke dogges, feinds, hideous outcries, fearefull noyses, shreekes, lamentable complaints' as well as 'Divells, bugbears and Mormeluches'.³⁰⁸ As Burton explains, a brain troubled by want of sleep or nutriment, or by an 'agitation of spirits', may reflect 'prodigious shapes, as our vaine feare and crased phantasie shall suggest and faigne'; and such visions are projected outward 'from inward causes, as a concave glass reflects solid bodies'.³⁰⁹

The melancholic subjects cannot be cured by 'Physicke' alone, but by exposure to 'Scriptures, good Divines, good advice and conference' and by 'applying Gods Word to their distressed Soules'.³¹⁰ However, those under religious melancholia may remain obdurate in remaining in their condition: 'they have cauterized consciences, they are in a reprobate sense, they cannot think a good thought, they cannot hope for grace, pray, beleeve, repent, or be sorry for their sins, they find no grieffe for sinne in themselves, but rather a delight, no groning of spirit, but are carried headlong to their owne destruction'. Partly, this obduracy derives from the influence of no less than the devil, who 'insults and domineeres in melancholy distempered phantasies and persons especially', and compels 'crazed soules' to think blasphemous thoughts against their wills.³¹¹ The devil suggests 'things opposite to nature, opposite to God & his word', things 'impious' and 'absurd, such as man would never think himselfe, or could not conceave', and he 'aggravates, extenuates, affirmes, denies, damnes, confounds the spirits, troubles hearte, braine, humours, organs, senses, and wholly domineeres in their Imaginations'.³¹² Burton calls melancholia, *balneum diaboli*, 'the divells bath', stating, it 'invites him to come to it', to mingle himself 'with our spirits' and suggest 'divelish thoughts into our hearts'.³¹³ In brief, religious

³⁰⁷ Burton, p. 426.

³⁰⁸ Burton, pp. 439, 442.

³⁰⁹ Burton, pp. 442-443.

³¹⁰ Burton, p. 425.

³¹¹ Burton, p. 433.

³¹² Burton, p. 433.

³¹³ *Ibid.*

melancholy is the symptom, and condition, that derives from and perpetuates the foregone chance for salvation through a God Who ‘loves to the end’.³¹⁴

The correlation between religious melancholy and the preclusion of God’s love is evinced in monomania as well. The *Cyclopaedia* describes cases ‘in which a disposition to melancholy and dejection of mind exists’, and describes their symptoms in relation to love and religious education. The person who suffers from melancholia will become ‘sorrowful and desponding’ even though he may be ‘surrounded with all the comforts of existence, and, exclusively of the disease, suffers ‘under no internal source of disquiet’, is ‘at peace with himself, with his own conscience, with his God’.³¹⁵ The ‘tendency to morbid sorrow and melancholy’ can be subject to control when it first arises, ‘and probably receives a peculiar character from the previous mental state of the individual, from his education, and his religious or irreligious character’.³¹⁶ Those with ‘well-regulated minds’ will be able to recover from melancholia, while those ‘of an opposite character give themselves up to the *taedium vitae*’.³¹⁷ An important difference between religious melancholy and monomania, though, is that whereas it is the devil that dissuades one from the love of God in the former, in the latter it is faulty epistemology.

In Broussais’s definition of ‘Intellectual’ monomanias grounded in hubris and faulty epistemology, he explains how a ‘pleasure’ derived from ‘the desire of observation (curiosity)’ of ‘external objects by means of our external senses’ causes one to ‘become passionately addicted to intellectual labor’. For Broussais, this conflation between empirical principles and addiction points out the impossibility of insulating empirical perceptions from ‘instinctive wants’, or preventing the infiltration of empirical study by perverted instinct.³¹⁸ One manner by which the instincts can disturb observation is by corrupting methods with a fantasy. In his explanation of ‘Monomania founded on self-satisfaction’ Broussais outlines a type of monomania prevalent among ‘those who become insane from excess of mental labor and study, whether they have been inflated by success, or discouraged by insurmountable difficulties’.³¹⁹ While one may not achieve intellectual triumph, he can compensate for it through ‘the enjoyment he can derive from the castles he builds in the air. The monomanias are, in fact, nothing but the

³¹⁴ Burton, p. 442.

³¹⁵ *Cyclopaedia*, p. 15.

³¹⁶ *Cyclopaedia*, p. 15.

³¹⁷ *Cyclopaedia*, p. 15.

³¹⁸ Broussais, p. 198.

³¹⁹ Broussais, p. 199.

realizing of castle-building'; and this 'castle-building' can cause monomaniacs to believe 'that they are God, whether of the christians [sic] or the pagans' and consider 'themselves as a spirit, an angel, a demon, a genius, a king, an emperor, a pope, a prince of the blood, a hero, a great nobleman, rich, opulent, learned; in believing they have made real discoveries'.³²⁰

We can see how the monomaniacal rejection of love and eventual gradient into violence affects Egaeus's relationship with Berenice: Egaeus recollects, 'I shuddered' in Berenice's 'presence, and grew pale at her approach', and 'during the brightest days of her unparalleled beauty, most surely I had never loved her'; and just as monomania drives its victims to inflict pain on those they should love, Egaeus mutilates the body of his wife; and just as the monomaniac becomes preoccupied by objects coincident with his delirium following his destructive act, Egaeus sits in a state of amnesia near the signifiers of his obsession, Berenice's teeth after his gruesome deed is executed.³²¹ Monomaniacal symptoms are also seen in Egaeus's subscription to an observational methodology that fixates on encompassing the spiritual world within empirical knowledge. Egaeus's 'intensity of interest' in 'the steady flame of a lamp' – with the flame connoting Platonic divinity – and 'the perfume of a flower' reveals this fascination for the intangible – a curiosity that carries over into his meditative absorptions in a 'shadow falling aslant on the tapestry'.³²² Standing in for the extra-empirical existence that Egaeus is cognizant of but which is too mutable and indefinable to be quantified rationally, the shadow on the tapestry recalls his 'pre-existence' as a disembodied soul that he claims resides in his memory 'like a shadow – vague, variable, indefinite, unsteady; and like a shadow, too, in the impossibility of my getting rid of it while the sunlight of my reason shall exist'. This obsession with capturing whatever ethereality lies beyond the parameters of life and transforming it into something that can be empirically scrutinized, is seen again when Egaeus simulates death by foregoing 'all sense of motion or physical existence, by means of absolute bodily quiescence long and obstinately persevered in' – a reification of the 'long night of what seemed, but was not, nonentity' that precedes his birth.³²³ His monomaniacal 'symptoms' occur in relation to discursive knowledge as well: Egaeus is '*riveted* to some frivolous device on the margin or in the typography of a book', cognizant of the 'margins' of knowledge but unable to move beyond

³²⁰ Broussais, p. 199.

³²¹ Poe, 'Berenice', pp. 101, 104.

³²² Poe, p. 99.

³²³ Poe, pp. 97-99.

them; and he reiterates ‘monotonously, some common word, until the sound, by dint of frequent repetition, cease[s] to convey any idea whatever to the mind’, unmooring the Platonic Ideal from its terrene representation.³²⁴ Returning his ‘intensity of interest’ back ‘in upon the original object as a centre’ and negating ‘any idea whatever to the mind’, monomania rivets Egaeus’s attentive properties to the ‘bottom rung’ of intellectual activity, precluding attainment of the Ideal.³²⁵ Through ‘dint of repetition’ monomania dissolves concatenations between words and Ideals, incessantly linking representation with its terrene simulacra. The word thereby becomes one with itself, self-contained from its Ideal counterpart. This collapse of Ideal into word extends to physical forms as well when Egaeus says of Berenice’s teeth, ‘*que toutes ses dents étaient des idées*’ – ‘all her teeth were ideas’.³²⁶

Serving to ‘irritate’ Egaeus’s monomania are his ‘very peculiar’ books: Caelius Secundus Curione’s *de Amplitudine Beati Regni Dei*, or *On the Great Extent of God’s Blessed Kingdom*, St. Augustine’s *City of God*, and Quintus Septimius Florens Tertullianus’s *de Carni Christi*, or *On the Flesh of Christ*. Having ‘characteristic qualities of the disorder itself’, these theological works indicate two things: that Egaeus’s monomania is characterized by the disjuncture between strict empiricism and the existence of the soul; and that his monomaniacal ‘castle-building’ pertains to the attempt to find soteriological completion within such an empirical paradigm. The ‘method’ by which Egaeus attempts this material salvation is through the burial and ‘resurrection’ of Berenice, his wife and soul’s embodiment. In a way, Egaeus reverses the soteriological process: instead of the Spirit elevating the soul and the body into immortality, he attempts to debase the Spirit, so that it is ‘self-contained’ in a material object, with its immortality embodied by the longevity of the teeth. The indicators that suggest Berenice’s disinterment and mutilation enact Egaeus’s resurrection can be gleaned through consideration of the theological works from his library.

Two of the books Egaeus mentions have a strong Pauline influence, while the remaining book pertains more to a broadened eligibility for salvation. We will start discussion with the Pauline-inflected works, Augustine’s *The City of God*, and Tertullian’s *On the Flesh of Christ*, before discussing Curione’s treatise. Of specific relevance is how these two works build on

³²⁴ Poe, ‘Berenice’, p. 99, emphasis added.

³²⁵ Poe, ‘Berenice’, p. 100, Jules Zanger, ‘Poe’s “Berenice”: Philosophical Fantasy and Its Pitfalls’, in *The Scope of the Fantastic: Theory, Technique, Major Authors*, ed. by Collins, Robert A. (Greenwood, 1985), pp. 135-142 (p. 142).

³²⁶ Poe, ‘Berenice’, p. 103, J. Gerald Kennedy, Notes to ‘Berenice’, in Kennedy, p. 612, (p. 612).

Paul's assertion that belief in the resurrection of the risen body is beyond ratiocination. Paul asserts the 'fact' of the resurrection, somewhat tautologically, when he states: 'For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised; And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins, Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ, are perished'.³²⁷ In other words, faith in the resurrection of Christ depends on a general faith that the self can be resurrected; conversely, faith in Christ's resurrection as God's act enables the resurrection of the self.³²⁸ This call for faith in the risen body is coincident with an invalidation of traditional knowledge that posits belief in Christ's resurrection as 'foolish'. Paul says, 'For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish, foolishness', but 'it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent'.³²⁹ He explicitly reiterates this point in Corinthians 1. 25 and 1. 27: 'the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God stronger than men', and 'God hath chosen the foolish things of the world, to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world, to confound the things that are mighty'.³³⁰ In effect, Paul establishes Christ's resurrection as a matter of faith beyond ratiocination.

This repudiation of ratiocination against belief in the risen body is expressed by Augustine and Tertullian as well. *The City of God* recalls the Pauline division between flesh and spirit by positing society as consisting of 'no more than just two kinds of human society, which we may justly call two cities, according to the language of our Scripture'. The first 'consists of those who choose to live after the flesh, the other of those who wish to live after the spirit', and where they 'severally achieve what they wish, they live in peace, each after their kind'.³³¹ This division between flesh and spirit defines those who live according to man and those according to God, with the ways of men perceiving those of God as foolish; and just as St. Paul corroborates belief in the resurrected body by relegating learned wisdom and positioning the resurrection as beyond ratiocination, Augustine also attempts to make credible the 'incredibility' of the resurrection, and posits three incredible facts: first, 'it is incredible that Jesus Christ should have risen from in the flesh and ascended with flesh into heaven'; second, 'it is incredible that the world should have believed so incredible a thing'; and third, 'it is incredible that a very few men'

³²⁷ Corinthians 15. 16-18.

³²⁸ Scroggs, p. 85.

³²⁹ Corinthians 1. 18-19.

³³⁰ Corinthians 1. 25, 1. 27.

³³¹ Aurelius Augustine, *The City of God*, ed. by Rev. Marcus Dods, 2 vols (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1871), II, (pp. 1-2).

of low birth, education and rank should ‘so effectually’ ‘persuade the world, and even its learned men, of so incredible a thing’. Of these three incredibles Augustine qualifies the last two by noting ‘it is indubitable that the resurrection of Christ, and His ascension into heaven with the flesh in which He rose, is already preached and believed in the whole world. If it is not credible, how is it that it has already received credence in the whole world’?³³² By utilizing the miracle of widespread belief in the resurrection to validate the miracle of the resurrection Augustine writes the event as both unbelievable and believable, paradoxically situating the resurrection as incredible yet still a postulate.

The central Pauline tropes from Scripture and *The City of God* are in *Of the Flesh of Christ* as well. Tertullian wrote his treatise in confutation of heresies that denied the reality of Christ’s human flesh. An alternate title for his work is *Flesh of Christ against Four Heresies*, specifically those of Marcion, Apelles, Basilides and Valentinus, and his counter-arguments are framed by the Pauline concern of describing Christ’s resurrection in order to understand humanity’s. ‘Did it ever exist?’ Tertullian asks of the risen body, ‘whence was it derived? and of what kind was it? If we succeed in demonstrating it we shall lay down a law for our own resurrection’.³³³

Of relevance to discussion of ‘Berenice’ are Tertullian’s assertions against Marcion, who argued Christ existed as a phantasm, and Apelles, who believed Christ’s flesh was made of the same material as stars. The crux of Marcion’s argument is that a fleshly body would be ‘beneath’ an exalted God, and that it would not matter if God practiced deception in affecting the assumption of humanity which He knew to be unreal. That humankind took the illusory body to be real would answer every purpose.³³⁴ Tertullian addresses this claim of the ‘unclean’ flesh with the implication that even if the human body is ‘unworthy’, then Christ, as the ‘life-giving spirit’ elevates it to ‘glorious’ form: ‘Our birth He reforms from death by a second birth from heaven’, says Tertullian, and if Christ restores the body, ‘cleanses it from stain’, ‘rekindles its light’, exorcises its devils, and reanimates it from death, ‘then shall *we* blush to own it’?³³⁵ His

³³² Augustine, pp. 478-479.

³³³ Peter Holmes, Notes to *Of the Flesh of Christ*, in *The Writings of Tertullian*, trans. by Peter Holmes, 2 vols (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1870), II, pp. 163-214, (p. 163), Quintus Septimius Florens Tertullianus, *The Treatise of Quintus Septimius Florens Tertullianus on The Flesh of Christ*, in *The Writings of Quintus Septimius Florens Tertullianus*, in *The Writings of Tertullian*, trans. by Peter Holmes, 2 vols (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1870), II, pp. 163-214, (p. 164).

³³⁴ Tertullian, p. 170, Holmes, p. 167.

³³⁵ Tertullian, p. 171.

corroborating illustration immediately recalls the Pauline notion of traditional knowledge confounded by God's 'foolishness'. Posing the hypothetical scenario of God preaching 'the kingdom of heaven invested with the body of' a wolf or cow, Tertullian claims that Marcion would censure this instantiation as 'disgraceful for God', 'unworthy of the Son of God, and simply foolish', and that he would make this judgment 'for no other reason than because one thus judges'.³³⁶ He then compounds his condemnation with reference to Corinthians: 'God hath chosen the foolish things of the world, to confound the wise'.³³⁷

The Pauline notion of God's 'foolish' things runs through Tertullian's entire argument: he also asserts, 'there are, to be sure, other things also quite as "foolish"' as the birth of Christ 'which have reference to the humiliations and sufferings of God', and 'you will not be "wise" unless you become a "fool" to the world, by believing the "foolish things of God"'.³³⁸ Tertullian's primary motivation in employing this trope about God's 'foolishness' is to undermine Marcion's reasoning against Christ's duality – a duality that Tertullian states explicitly:

Christ could not be described as being a man without flesh, nor the Son of man without any human parent; just as He is not God without the Spirit of God, nor the Son of God without having God for His father. Thus the nature of the two substances displayed Him as man and God, – in one respect born, in the other unborn; in one respect fleshly, in the other spiritual.³³⁹

In a more implied sense, Tertullian counters Marcion's arguments for an illusory Christ by picturing Christ's dual nature in a series of binaries: 'For which is more unworthy of God, which is more likely to raise a blush of shame? That God should be born, or that He should die? That He should bear the flesh, or the cross? Be circumcised, or be crucified'?³⁴⁰ The soteriological tropes in these questions – Christ's death, the cross, the crucifixion – are paired with fleshly images to suggest their lost meaning without human referents. Yet Marcion would 'cut away all

³³⁶ Tertullian, p. 172.

³³⁷ Corinthians 1. 27 in Tertullian, p. 172.

³³⁸ Tertullian, p. 172, p. 173.

³³⁹ Tertullian, p. 174.

³⁴⁰ Tertullian, pp. 172-173.

sufferings from Christ, on the ground that, as a mere phantom, He was incapable of experiencing them'; for this reason he remains foolish until he believes the "foolish things of God"''.³⁴¹

Tertullian's argument with Marcion provides the context for the 'paradoxical sentence' that occupies Egaeus's 'undivided time, for many weeks of laborious and fruitless investigation', included here with Tertullian's preceding and succeeding statements:

The Son of God was crucified; I am not ashamed because men must needs be ashamed [of it]. *And the Son of God died; it is by all means to be believed, because it is absurd. And He was buried, and rose again; the fact is certain, because it is impossible.* But how will all this be true in Him, if He was not Himself true – if he really had not in Himself that which might be crucified, might die, might be buried, and might rise again?³⁴²

Considered within its full rhetorical basis, the 'paradoxical sentence' refers to the fleshly and spiritual nature of Christ, recalling that while it is 'shameful' or 'unworthy' of God to appear in human form, the humanity of Christ gives the crucifixion meaning. Descriptions of the resurrection as 'absurd' and 'impossible' foreground the event as a 'foolish' thing of God placed beyond learned reasoning. The fact of Egaeus's inability to understanding the meaning of Tertullian's sentence aligns him with those whose knowledge is confounded by the 'foolishness' of the resurrection and who cannot grasp the duality of flesh and spirit. Egaeus's inability to comprehend the dual nature of Christ and the new eschatological humanity is further affirmed by reference to Curione's *On the Great Extent of God's Blessed Kingdom*.

The crux of Curione's argument is that if more souls are damned than saved then 'the divell hath the greater sovereignty, for what is power but to protect'?³⁴³ Based on these grounds Curione's treatise seeks to expand the parameters of who can achieve salvation, as he states, 'God is good, and will not then bee contracted in his goodnesse, for how is hee the Father of mercy and comfort, if his goode concern but a few?'.³⁴⁴ God's compassion thereby encompasses everyone, even non-Christians: 'upright livers, no matter of what Religion' or 'out of any Nation' 'shall be saved', so long as they 'live honestly, call on God, trust in him, feare him'; and

³⁴¹ Tertullian, p. 173.

³⁴² Poe, 'Berenice', p. 100, Tertullian, pp. 173-174.

³⁴³ Burton, p. 437.

³⁴⁴ Curione in Burton, p. 438.

not only non-believers, but ‘wicked livers, Blasphemers, Reprobates, and such as reject Gods grace’ including ‘the divells themselves shall be saved at last’.³⁴⁵ That Egaeus’s own attitude to salvation is in alignment with Curione’s is suggested through his extolment of the ‘noble Italian’, while reference to the work itself draws attention to the manner in which Egaeus will attempt to achieve salvation without the ‘life-giving spirit’.³⁴⁶

Yet how does Egaeus’s disjuncture from the ‘life-giving spirit’ relate to the bloody extraction of Berenice’s teeth? An answer may be approached by remembering that Berenice embodies Egaeus’s soul. As Egaeus states about his wife:

she had flitted by my eyes, and I had seen her – not as the living and breathing Berenice, but as the Berenice of a dream; not as a being of the earth, earthy, but as the abstraction of such a being; not as a thing to admire, but to analyze; not as an object of love, but as the theme of the most abstruse although desultory speculation.³⁴⁷

Direct reference to Corinthians recalls the Pauline distinction between flesh and spirit as well as Poe’s own philosophy on Beauty. The fact that Egaeus sees Berenice as a being not ‘of the earth, earthy’, but rather the ‘abstraction’ of ‘such a being’ indicates a substitution of the earthy for the otherworldly and spiritual – an exchange indicated as well when he claims to see Berenice not as ‘living and breathing’ but as a ‘dream’.³⁴⁸ Egaeus’s distorted perception of Berenice reflects the ‘inversion of commonest thought’ characteristic of monomania: ‘the realities of the world affected me as visions, and as visions only, while the wild ideas of the land of dreams became, in turn, not the material of my every-day existence, but in very deed that existence utterly and solely in itself’.³⁴⁹ That the limitations of monomania define Egaeus’s relationship with Berenice is brought into relief when he sees Berenice as a ‘thing’ to ‘analyze’, a ‘theme’ of ‘desultory speculation’, as opposed to an ‘object of love’. This preclusion of love references the Christian association of love with the Holy Spirit. ‘The fruit of the Spirit is love’, Paul says in his letter to the Galatians, and in his letter to the Romans, ‘the love of God is shed

³⁴⁵ Burton, pp. 437-438.

³⁴⁶ Poe, ‘Berenice’, p. 100.

³⁴⁷ Poe, ‘Berenice’, p. 101.

³⁴⁸ Poe, ‘Berenice’, p. 101.

³⁴⁹ Poe, p. 98.

abroad in our hearts, by the holy Ghost which is given unto us'.³⁵⁰ However, since love involves a Spiritual aspect, Egaeus is incapable of its realization due to the limitations of his disease; and just as monomania 'rivets' Egaeus to the margins of knowledge, he can only desultorily speculate and analyze what should be the proper object of love.

Tellingly, Berenice 'dies' as the period of nuptials approaches, thereby replacing a union of love with a union in which the flesh is tied to death. The 1835 edition of the *Southern Literary Messenger* and the 1840 edition of *Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque* include a scene usually omitted from standard editions of 'Berenice' in which Egaeus attends Berenice's wake. Taking place in the 'bed-chamber of the departed', where Egaeus approaches 'the side of the bed', uplifts 'the draperies of the curtains', and lets them descend on his shoulders, enclosing him 'in the strictest communion with the deceased', the scene is a morbid inversion of the marital bed; but where the 'union of person', or the union of flesh and spirit, should be consummated, is instead Egaeus's encounter with the items that materialize his soul, specifically, 'the white and glistening, and ghastly teeth of Berenice'.³⁵¹

The connection between Berenice's teeth and Egaeus's soul is made by the allusions carried in her name itself. Berenice, the daughter of King Agrippa is present at Paul's trial when Festus shouts at him for believing in the resurrection, 'Paul, thou art beside thyself: much learning doth make thee mad'.³⁵² Her name thereby reiterates the theme of God's 'foolishness' being beyond traditional learning. On another level Berenice's name alludes to Catullus's poem about Berenice, wife to her first cousin Ptolemy Euergetes, who sacrifices a lock of her hair in prayer for her husband's safe home-coming after he departs for war. The lock of hair is then born into the sky by gods, where it becomes a constellation.³⁵³

The catasterism of Berenice's lock gains theological resonance when figured within Tertullian's argument against the heresy of Apelles. Like Marcion, Apelles also stresses the shameful condition of the flesh and its unworthiness for Christ; however, where Marcion limns Christ as phantasmagorical, Apelles argues that the constituting material of Christ's physical self

³⁵⁰ Galatians 5. 22. Romans 5. 5.

³⁵¹ Thomas Ollive Mabbott, Notes to 'Berenice', in *Collected Works of Edgar Allan Poe. Tales and Sketches. 1831-1842*, ed. by Thomas Ollive Mabbott, 3 vols (London: Belknap Press, 1978), II pp. 219-221 (p. 217).

³⁵² Acts of the Apostles, 25. 13, 26. 24.

³⁵³ Catullus, 'LXVI', in *The Poems of Catullus*, trans. by Hugh MacNaghten (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1925), p. 113. Joan Dayan, 'The Identity of Berenice, Poe's Idol of the Mind', in *Studies in Romanticism*, 23. 4 (1984), 491-513 (p. 495).

comes ‘from the stars, and from the substances of a higher world’.³⁵⁴ Tertullian addresses Apelles’s literalization of the ‘celestial’ imagery of Corinthians by asserting that the statement, ‘the first man is of the earth, earthy; the second man is the lord from heaven’ has ‘nothing to do with any difference of substance; it only contrasts with the once “earthy” substance of the flesh of the first man, Adam, the “heavenly” substance of the spirit of the second man, Christ’. For Tertullian, the ‘celestial’ man refers to the man of the Spirit and that ‘those whom it compares to Him evidently become celestial – by the Spirit, of course – even in this “earthy” flesh’. As Christ rises in the ‘earthy’ flesh to return to heaven, so will those believers who are ‘put on a level with Him’.³⁵⁵ When read against *Of the Flesh of Christ*, Catullus’s poem thereby points to Berenice’s disfigurement as Egaeus’s attempt to establish a purely material soteriology. Unable to understand a Spirit existent beyond empirical and physical bounds, he literalizes Paul’s ‘celestial’ metaphor and enacts ‘salvation’ through the burial and resurrection of his ‘soul’. The final images of Egaeus’s narrative confirm the risen spirit: the impress of ‘nails’ in his hand, the ‘tenant of the tomb’, the ‘body enshrouded, yet still breathing – still palpitating – still alive’, and the teeth ‘scattered to and fro about the floor’ like stars.³⁵⁶

Ironically, in accordance with Poe’s philosophy, Berenice already is representative of Egaeus’s capacity to achieve Beauty and the Spirit, even if his monomania disables him from comprehending this. ‘She had loved me long’, Egaeus says of Berenice, a statement that recalls ‘The Poetic Principle’ and Beauty’s reification in a woman’s ‘divine love’; and this connection between Berenice and Beauty is drawn explicitly when Egaeus remembers her as a ‘gorgeous yet fantastic beauty’.³⁵⁷ Her namesake as well hints at a love story in that Catullus’s Berenice marries her first cousin, the same blood relation Poe’s Berenice shares with Egaeus; and Egaeus’s name – a reference to the Egaeus in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* who fails to understand love – affirms undercurrents of unrequited love in Poe’s tale. In this regard, the ‘fatal disease’ that befalls Berenice is the love for her cousin that transforms her into a representation of Egaeus’s ability to achieve salvation through the Spirit.³⁵⁸ This love story is further implied in Egaeus’s description of the ‘mystery and terror’ that befalls Berenice: suggestions of romantic

³⁵⁴ Tertullian, p. 183 and p. 176.

³⁵⁵ Tertullian, p. 184.

³⁵⁶ Poe, ‘Berenice’, p. 104, Dayan, ‘Idol’, pp. 511-512.

³⁵⁷ Poe, ‘Berenice’, pp. 101, 98.

³⁵⁸ Poe, ‘Berenice’, p. 98, Thomas Ollive Mabbott, Introduction to ‘Berenice’, in *Collected Works of Edgar Allan Poe. Tales and Sketches. 1831-1842*, ed. by Thomas Ollive Mabbott, 3 vols (London: Belknap Press, 1978), pp. 207-208 (p. 208). Poe, p. 98.

feelings – her ‘light-heartedness and joy’ – immediately lead to disease, or the ‘spirit of change’, that transforms ‘her mind, her habits, and her character’, and ‘even the identity of her person’ in ‘a manner the most subtle and terrible’ until she is no longer known ‘as Berenice’. This ‘spiritual’ connection between Egaeus and Berenice is also made by the similarity in ‘symptoms’. Just as Egaeus falls into ‘bodily quiescence’, Berenice succumbs to ‘a species of epilepsy’, and as the disease further inflicts Berenice, Egaeus’s disorder grows ‘rapidly upon’ him.³⁵⁹

As an instantiation of Egaeus’s ability to achieve salvation, Berenice’s physical form literally makes specular the ‘fleshly’ condition of his soul, and the final ‘living’ image of Berenice paints a soul that is ‘corruptible’, death-like and detached from the ‘life-giving spirit’: the skull-like forehead is ‘high’ and ‘very pale’, her temples are ‘hollow’, ‘melancholy’ reigns over her ‘countenance’, and the eyes are ‘lifeless, and lusterless, and seemingly pupilless’. After noticing Berenice’s teeth Egaeus states, ‘would to God that I had never beheld them, or that, having done so, I had died’ – an ironic statement, because spiritually he is already one of the ‘perished’.³⁶⁰

Significantly, Egaeus recalls that during their ‘final’ meeting Berenice ‘spoke no word; and I – not for worlds could I have uttered a syllable’.³⁶¹ This congruency not only reaffirms the spiritual link between Egaeus and Berenice, but calls forth ‘The Poetic Principle’, in which the achievement of Beauty is contingent on the capacity for expression. In conjuncture with Berenice’s ghastly appearance, the mutual silence underscores how Egaeus will never achieve an authentic ‘elevation of the soul’. Rather, his monomaniacal fixations rivet him to the material mechanics of expression. This conflation of Spirit and Beauty with Berenice’s mouth is suggested when Egaeus assigns the teeth a ‘capability of moral expression’ even when ‘unassisted by the lips’; and this suggestion is repeated in the omitted ‘wedding bed’ when, just before Egaeus sees Berenice’s teeth, a ‘band around’ her ‘jaws’ becomes ‘broken asunder’.³⁶² With Egaeus’s final possession of the teeth, the authentic capacity to ‘elevate the soul’ through the association with Spirit is finally and irrevocably denied to him – it exists only as ‘the spirit of

³⁵⁹ Poe, ‘Berenice’, pp. 98-99.

³⁶⁰ Poe, ‘Berenice’, p. 102.

³⁶¹ *Ibid.*

³⁶² Poe, ‘Berenice’, p. 103. Mabbott, Notes, p. 217.

a departed sound' – and his damnation is spelled out as 'ever and anon' a 'shrill and piercing shriek' rings in his ears.³⁶³

Conclusion

The aim of this chapter was to construct a methodology for analysing identity in Poe's fiction. The primary ideas that organize identity construction for Poe are: a Neoplatonic teleology; the conflation of the Platonic conceptualization of Beauty with Christian notions of love, the Holy Spirit, and a union with God; the Pauline dichotomy between Adam and Christ; the putrescent or disarticulate body as unredeemed, or Adamic; and the female Other as a spiritual aspect of the male self. Significant as well to Poe's identities is the self divided between epistemology and the Absolute aspects of the Spirit and Ideal, with discussion of 'Berenice' serving to illustrate how this division between epistemology and Ideality forms identity. This chapter also illustrated how women serve as organizing tropes in Poe's literature due to their connections with Neoplatonic ideals of love and Beauty, and as will be seen in succeeding chapters, even when women characters are more secondary to the narrative they still maintain an organizing absence. Having provided the under-riding philosophy of many of Poe's tales, this thesis will now show how this philosophy is embedded in, and reacts with, early America's ideological figurations of property and Native Americans. The next chapter will focus specifically on property in Poe's fiction, especially as it relates to finding a 'root' to land ownership.

³⁶³ Poe, 'Berenice', pp. 103-104.

Chapter Three: National Ideality: ‘The Oblong Box’, ‘The Domain of Arnheim’, and Schlegel’s Theory of the National ‘Root’

The following chapter will mobilize the methodologies put forward in Chapter Two to examine how Neoplatonism structures Poe’s ideas about property and land. Referring once again to Schlegel’s *Lectures*, this chapter will illustrate how Poe subscribes to Schlegel’s theory that nationhood has a ‘root’, or Neoplatonic Ideal. For Poe, the nation’s ‘root’ is analogous to the human soul, an essentiality that must be elevated through the Spirit. The method for elevating the national ‘root’ is by investing the poetic sentiment into the land through labour. In order to outline how Poe conceptualizes this national ‘root’ this chapter will discuss ‘The Oblong Box’, as well as Schlegel’s concept of the national ‘root’ vis-à-vis the formation of a national literature and criticism. The chapter will then examine Poe’s ‘The Domain of Arnheim’ as an artistic project to locate and express national Ideality.

‘The Oblong Box’

We can see how Poe conceptualizes the idea of national ‘root’ within his own Neoplatonic theories outlined in the previous chapter in his tale, ‘The Oblong Box’. Told by an unreliable narrator, the tale’s mystery revolves around the unknown connection between the narrator’s friend, Cornelius Wyatt, Wyatt’s supposed wife, and the eponymous oblong box. Typifying the poet as described in ‘The Poetic Principle’, Wyatt displays both Christian charity, and a preoccupation with the Beautiful: he has the ‘ordinary temperament of genius’, the personal traits of ‘misanthropy, sensibility, and enthusiasm’, and ‘the warmest and truest heart which ever beat in a human bosom’; he enthusiastically ‘comments upon the loveliness of women’; he soars ‘into the regions of the purely ideal’ when beauty is the ‘theme’ of conversation; and he has ‘so refined, so intellectual, so fastidious’, ‘so exquisite a perception of

the faulty, and so keen an appreciation of the beautiful'.³⁶⁴ In contrast, Wyatt's false wife – a servant in disguise – is a 'decidedly plain-looking woman', almost 'positively ugly' and 'rather indifferent looking, totally uneducated, and decidedly vulgar'.³⁶⁵ In short, she is not Beautiful, and her 'uneducated' disposition means she cannot guide her lover through the fields of Sciences and Philosophy that lead to Ideality. Basically, Wyatt's false bride embodies the Pandemian lover characterized by a homeliness and passion detrimental to the soul's struggle for Beauty, since its tendency is to degrade rather than elevate the soul. When compared to Wyatt's supernal disposition, these Pandemian aspects cause the narrator to suppose that 'some fit of enthusiastic and fanciful passion' prompted Wyatt to 'unite himself with a person altogether beneath him'.³⁶⁶ In a sense, 'Mrs Wyatt's' signifiatory relation to the oblong box metaphorizes the condition of the 'false bride' in Poe's philosophy, as an outward appearance of femininity that conceals a 'dead' capacity to elevate the soul through love and facilitate a union with God; and this lost spiritual capacity is emphasized when the narrator supposes the oblong box to hold 'a copy of Leonardo's "Last Supper"'.³⁶⁷ This inability to achieve a union with God through Eros and love affects Wyatt, leaving him spiritually dead and incapable of expressing Beauty, as indicated when the narrator's unwitting allusion to the deceased wife renders Wyatt 'to all appearance' 'dead', and unable to express himself 'for some time'.³⁶⁸

Sharing a similar condition with the false wife is the narrator, who is also incapable of understanding Ideality. Twice the narrator refers to the oblong box's contents as a 'mystification'.³⁶⁹ Poe's use of the term 'mystification' can be understood through brief discussion of his short story of the same name, in which the protagonist, Von Jung, backs out of a duel against his rival, Johan Hermann, by referring him to a passage from a coded treatise called *Duelli Lex Scrippa, et non; aliterque*. After reading the passage in question, Hermann then accepts Von Jung's withdrawal and acknowledges his 'chivalrous behaviour'. The 'twist' is that the passage from the *Duelli*, as it appears '*prima facie*', is 'ingeniously framed so as to present to the ear all the outward signs of intelligibility, and even profundity, while in fact not a

³⁶⁴ Edgar Allan Poe, 'The Oblong Box', in *The Portable Edgar Allan Poe*, ed. by J. Gerald Kennedy (London: Penguin, 2006), pp. 306-316 (pp. 306, 310).

³⁶⁵ Poe, 'Oblong', pp. 308, 310.

³⁶⁶ Poe, 'Oblong', p. 310.

³⁶⁷ Poe, 'Oblong', p. 308.

³⁶⁸ Poe, 'Oblong', pp. 308, 311.

³⁶⁹ Poe, 'Oblong', pp. 309, 311.

shadow of meaning' exists.³⁷⁰ By calling the oblong box a 'mystification' the narrator ironically points out his own methodological short-comings of being able to read 'outward signs', but not cohere them into a meaning, as indicated when he describes the oblong box as 'pine', 'six feet in length by two and a half in breadth', and 'peculiar in shape', but does not consolidate this data into the obvious idea of a coffin.³⁷¹

While the majority of Poe's married women stories take place in a European setting, 'The Oblong Box' is specifically set in America. Not only is the packet-ship named 'Independence', but its lifeboats land at Ocracoke Inlet and near Roanoke Island, sites of first English settlements in the New World. Furthermore, the surviving passengers imply a microcosm of early nineteenth-century North American society, with 'the captain and his wife, Mr Wyatt and party, a Mexican officer, wife, four children', the narrator, and 'a negro valet'.³⁷² Basically, Poe metaphorically presents the foundation of America. Significantly excluded from this national founding are Wyatt, who returns to the *Independence*, lashes himself to his wife's coffin, and sinks into the sea, and the dead wife, who represents the lost potential to elevate the soul through love, Beauty and Spirituality. The Captain's refusal to return to the *Independence* for the oblong box is a symbolic rejection of the spiritual elements which the dead wife represents. What Poe says about America with this metaphor is that at its 'root' the nation is not only missing the poet, with his 'poetic sensibilities', but the elements of love and Beauty themselves, and, in relation to this, an essential national Ideality. What remains instead of 'poets' are types like the narrator and false wife, subjects who lack the proper souls to perceive Beauty, or elevate the soul, and so instantiate empty signification in the sense that they exist without any essential interiority. Wyatt's imploration to the Captain to return for the coffin thereby becomes a condemnation of early nineteenth-century American society because it is a list of the things that it forsakes: 'By the mother who bore you – for the love of Heaven – by your hope of salvation, I *implore* you to put back for the box'.³⁷³

Just exactly what is exchanged for the nation's Spiritual 'root' is implied in the tale's final substitution when Captain Hardy tells the narrator that the oblong box was 'conveyed on board as merchandise'. In other words, the Spiritual 'root' is replaced by property, a

³⁷⁰ Edgar Allan Poe, 'Mystification', in *The Complete Tales and Poems of Edgar Allan Poe* (New York: Vintage, 1975), pp. 354-360 (p. 360).

³⁷¹ Poe, 'Oblong', p. 308

³⁷² Poe, 'Oblong', p. 314.

³⁷³ Poe, 'Oblong', p. 314.

replacement which leaves its national subjects ‘more dead than alive’, meaning they are without an essential interiority.³⁷⁴ This detriment of property to the soul’s elevation is noted at different times by Poe. In *Marginalia*, Poe states, ‘The Romans worshipped their standards; and the Roman standard happened to be an eagle. Our standard is only one-tenth of an Eagle – a Dollar – but we make all even by adoring it with tenfold devotion’.³⁷⁵ And in ‘Pinakidia’ Poe quotes a passage from the Psalms rewritten by William Slayter in 1642, which condemns the extolment of riches over morality: ‘The righteous shall his sorrows scan, | And laugh at him, and say, “Behold! | What hath become of this here man, | That on his riches was so bold”’.³⁷⁶ This replacement of the essential ‘root’ for merchandise results in an artificiality in both the nation, and its national subjects. The *Lectures*’ agenda is to expunge national artificiality by locating a national essence and providing the paradigm that would enable its artistic expression. Poe takes up this project in ‘The Domain of Arnheim’ by drawing the national ‘root’ as inherent in the land itself.

Schlegel’s Lectures and the National ‘Root’

As Schlegel states in his Introduction, the purpose of the *Lectures* is to give a ‘general’ historical view and develop ‘those ideas which ought to guide us in our estimate of the value of the dramatic productions of various ages and nations’.³⁷⁷ Such guiding ideas are found in a supposed Platonic idea of the nation. In part, Schlegel’s project is a quest to find the ‘zero degree’ of nationhood, the place where it is rooted in the universal and ideal, immutable to cultural and historical vicissitudes, and where anxieties of its constructedness are put to rest.³⁷⁸ The more national art expresses its extra-phenomenal and universal ‘root’ the more natural those national expressions become. Inversely, artistic divagations from the nation’s immutable ideal plunge the nation into artifice. By critiquing Germany’s preoccupation with artifice, and by not

³⁷⁴ Poe, ‘Oblong’, pp. 316, 315.

³⁷⁵ Poe, *Marginalia*, p. 350.

³⁷⁶ Poe, ‘Pinakidia’, p. 498.

³⁷⁷ Augustus William Schlegel, *A Course of Lectures on Dramatic Art and Literature*, trans. by John Black, 2 vols (Edinburgh: William Blackwood, 1815), I (1815), ix.

³⁷⁸ For discussion of the concept of ‘zero degree’ of subjectivity see Mladen Dolar, “‘I Shall Be With You on Your Wedding Night’: Lacan and the Uncanny”, in *Gothic: Critical Concepts in Literacy and Cultural Studies*, ed. by Fred Botting and Dale Townsend, 4 vols (London: Routledge, 2004), III, pp. 12-30, p. 23.

only extolling national statements of its universal ideal, but by providing a model as to how such expressions can be achieved, Schlegel's literary criticism is a palliative as well as a patriotic act.

Thematically, this nationalism 'sets the stage' in the Preface of the *Lectures* in an anecdote about their presentation to their audience. In the lectures' final moments Schlegel invokes 'recollections of the old German renown sacred to every one possessed of true patriotic sentiment', and whilst his audience is 'thus more solemnly attuned', he becomes 'powerfully agitated' by the knowledge that his relationship with them, 'founded on a common love for nobler mental cultivation', will 'soon be dissolved'. Schlegel recounts, 'A general emotion was perceptible, excited by so much that I could not say, but respecting which our hearts understood each other. In the mental dominion of thought and poetry, inaccessible to worldly power, the Germans, who are separated in so many ways from each other, still feel their unity'. The inspiration for this moment of affect is explained in terms that recall both the elevated Platonic soul and a Kantian relationship with national space: 'amidst our clouded prospects we may still cherish the elevating presage of the great and immortal calling of our people, who from time immemorial have remained unmixed in their present habitations'.³⁷⁹ Schlegel's tropes of sentiment establish a paradox about an 'elevating' affection, an ideal 'German-ness' that is immutable, ineffable, and beyond 'worldly power', yet still attainable through 'thought and poetry' and 'nobler mental cultivation', even while that same 'worldly power' of Germany itself is 'clouded' and 'separated in so many ways'.

Schlegel implements a methodology of aesthetics, or a 'philosophical theory of beauty and art', to facilitate expression of the national ideal. In order for this aestheticism to be considered 'of sufficient practical instruction' it must be united 'with the history of arts', in other words with what is overarching, and, in a more implied sense, with what is universal. Schlegel defends his aestheticism by pointing out what he sees as the necessity of a universal perspective: 'we see numbers of men, and even whole nations, so much fettered by the habits of their education and modes of living, that they cannot shake themselves free from them, even in the enjoyment of fine arts'. For such people nothing 'appears natural, proper, or beautiful, which is foreign to their language, their manners, or their social relations'. While a focused study on domestic art can provide some forms of cultivated artistic discrimination in a 'narrow', 'circumscribed' sense, no one 'can be a true critic or connoisseur who does not possess a

³⁷⁹ Schlegel, I, xi-xii.

universality of mind', who cannot throw 'aside all personal predilections and blind habits' and transport himself 'into the peculiarities of other ages and nations'. A true critic recognizes 'whatever is beautiful' despite the 'external modifications which are necessary' to its existence, 'and which sometimes even seem to disguise them'.³⁸⁰

This properly universal aestheticism enables the critic to recognize true poetry, which is defined in terms that indicate a Neoplatonic influence: 'Poetry, taken in its widest acceptance, as the power of creating what is beautiful, and representing it to the eye or the ear, is a universal gift of Heaven, which is even shared to a certain extent by those we call barbarians and savages'. Where poetry does exist the critic must not allow himself to be 'repelled by external appearances'.³⁸¹ Rather, to discern true poetry is to recognize the essential, be it the ideal or the soul, or more specifically, the nation's ideal or the souls of its subjects. In both instances the recognition of poetry is a recognition of the spiritual 'root' of identity, the true essence, without which one remains an artificial shell. Schlegel explains the vital distinction between true and artificial poetry by expanding on his 'organic' trope in a way that limns poetry's immutable 'root': 'Every thing must be traced up to the root of our existence: if it has sprung from thence, it must possess an undoubted worth; but if, without possessing a living germ, it is merely an external appendage, it can never thrive nor acquire a proper growth'. While artificial poetry may 'appear at first sight dazzling phenomena' or the 'works of a golden age', it is analogous to the 'mimic gardens' of impatient children who 'break off here and there branches and flowers, and plant them in the earth'. While the garden first assumes a noble appearance, the 'rootless plants begin to droop, and hang down their withered leaves and flowers, and nothing soon remains but bear twigs'. In contrast, the 'rooted' and natural symbolized by the 'dark forest', is that 'on which no art or care was ever bestowed, and which towered up toward heaven long before human remembrance'; it 'bears every blast unshaken, and fills the solitary beholder with religious awe'.³⁸² The connection of the 'root' with 'religious awe' and 'heaven' – in other words with mysticism and its associations with ideality and divinity – is stated by Schlegel explicitly: 'Religion is the root of human existence. Were it possible for man to renounce all

³⁸⁰ Schlegel, I, 3.

³⁸¹ Schlegel, I, 3-4.

³⁸² Schlegel, I, 4.

religion, including that of which he is unconscious, and over which he has no control, he would become a mere surface without any internal substance'.³⁸³

By making religion the 'root' of 'human existence' Schlegel privileges Western Christianity even though the same root gestures to a Platonic influence. Schlegel's aesthetic methodology thereby signals a syncretism that emphasizes Christianity as vital and Platonism as static, with the 'spirit' of ancient art depicted as 'plastic', and that of the moderns 'picturesque'.³⁸⁴ Also calling the 'modern' spirit 'romantic', Schlegel explains that the difference between plastic and romantic art is that 'antique art and poetry separate, in a strict manner, things which are dissimilar', while romantic art 'delights in indissoluble mixtures', and blends together all contrarities – 'nature and art, poetry and prose, seriousness and mirth, recollection and anticipation, spirituality and sensuality, terrestrial and celestial, life and death' – in 'the most intimate manner'.³⁸⁵ Ancient art is 'an harmonious promulgation of the permanently established legislation of a world submitted to a beautiful order, and reflecting in itself the eternal images of things', while romantic poetry strives after 'new and wonderful births' and is the expression of 'a secret attraction to chaos which is concealed beneath the regulated creation even in its very bosom'. The 'animating spirit of original love hovers' 'anew above the waters' in romantic poetry, and despite its 'fragment-like' appearance, 'approaches more to the secret of the universe' in its acknowledgment that 'nothing can ever in truth exist separately'.³⁸⁶

In juxtaposition, classical art, whether poetry or drama, is plastic because it is analogous to a group of sculptures: 'the figures correspond to the characters, their grouping to the action', and the only subject explored is the one that is exhibited.³⁸⁷ Plastic art represents ideality, the originary idea, in a manner that suggests nothing 'mystic' exists beyond what can be experienced by the faculties of the mind: 'Sculpture directs our attention exclusively to the groupe [sic] exhibited to us, it disentangles it as far as possible from all external accompaniments, and where they cannot be altogether dispensed with, they are indicated as light as possible'.³⁸⁸ In contrast, romantic art is like a large picture that allows its audience to meditate on the figures and motions displayed as well as 'what surrounds' them. The picturesque represents 'not merely the nearest

³⁸³ Schlegel, I, 12-13.

³⁸⁴ Schlegel, I, 9.

³⁸⁵ Schlegel, II, 98-99.

³⁸⁶ Schlegel, II, 99.

³⁸⁷ Schlegel, II, 99.

³⁸⁸ Schlegel, I, 349.

objects', but 'the prospect of a considerable distance, and all this under a magical light'.³⁸⁹ Although the romantic scene is 'bounded' less perfectly than the antique because it is like a 'fragment cut out of the optic scene of the world', it is capable of opening 'to us in the back ground a prospect into a boundless distance', and enabling 'us to see in bodily objects what is least corporeal, namely, light and air'.³⁹⁰

This difference between the 'bounded' and 'boundless' is the same difference between the material and mystical. As Schlegel states, 'the principle of the antique poetry is ideal, that of the romantic mystical: the former subjects space and time to the internal free-activity of the mind; the latter adores these inconceivable essences as supernatural powers, in whom something of divinity has its abode'.³⁹¹ By hinting at the 'considerable distance' beyond objectivity which holds the 'least corporeal' 'light and air', implying, with an elemental idiom, Christ and divinity, the picturesque signifies the ineffable spiritual realm beyond the empirical world, as well as the promise of the soteriological unification of the spiritual and sensible, terrestrial and celestial, and life and death. In part, such an aestheticism responds to eighteenth-century empiricism, which Schlegel criticizes for defining 'what is possessed of life as a mere accumulation of dead parts' instead of 'penetrating to the central point and viewing all the parts as so many irradiations from it'. Empirically characterized, the literature of the eighteenth century never looked 'for more than the logical connexion of causes and effects', and forced 'some partial and trivial moral by way of application'.³⁹² Schlegel disputes such literature by constructing an aestheticism that considers the 'central point' beyond empiricism, or as he states, 'I require a unity which lies much deeper, is more fervent, and more mysterious than that with which most critics are satisfied'.³⁹³

Schlegel's use of the word 'unity' is significant in the context of constructing an aesthetic theory because it not only refers to a literary work's structure as a whole, but the Platonic ideal with which the rational mind communicates in order to form a judgment. Schlegel disagrees with literature structured by the 'logical connexion of causes and effects' prescribed in Aristotle's *unity of action*, arguing that such literature can never arrive at completion: 'where are the limits of this plurality? Is not the concatenation of causes and effects, backwards and

³⁸⁹ Schlegel, II, 100.

³⁹⁰ Schlegel, II, 100, Schlegel, I, 349, Schlegel, II, 100.

³⁹¹ Schlegel, I, 349.

³⁹² Schlegel, II, 126.

³⁹³ Schlegel, I, 337.

forwards, without end; and consequently should we not begin and break off every where in the same manner?’³⁹⁴ According to Schlegel, ‘we may go on to an almost endless accumulation of events’ without ever violating Aristotelian unity, ‘as in the *Thousand and One Nights* [sic], where the thread of the story is never once broken’.³⁹⁵ Instead of judging art on the merits of *unity of action*, the critic should consider how the separate components of an artwork are internalized by human understanding to establish a ‘joint impression on the mind’. This overall impression is the *unity of interest*, a phrase coined by Baron Friedrich Heinrich Karl de la Motte Fouqué, which is conceptualized around the correspondence between sensory impressions and Platonic idealness. While the initial impressions of art are garnered by external senses which perceive objects in an ‘indefinite plurality of distinguishable parts’, the ability to comprehend the parts in ‘one entire and perfect unity’ and form a judgement is ‘always founded on the reference to a higher sphere of ideas’.³⁹⁶

The agency to unify the empirical and mystical in the *unity of interest* is exactly that aspect which Schlegel denies to the Platonic figures and structures in his aestheticism. By ‘reflecting *in itself* the eternal images’ of a beautifully harmonious order, plastic representation does not gesture to anything mystical beyond itself. This inability to represent a mystical and ‘boundless’ distance is directly related to religion and the manner in which Schlegel positions Classical theology and art within a soteriological logic as earthly. Specifically, Schlegel defines Classical religion as ‘the deification of the powers of nature and of the earthly things’; and for this reason, ‘however far the Greeks may have carried beauty, and even morality, we cannot allow any higher character to their formation than that of a refined and ennobled sensuality’.³⁹⁷ For the ancient Greeks, human nature ‘was in itself all-sufficient’ and ‘aspired to no higher perfection than that which they could actually retain by the exercise of their own faculties’; their religion was a ‘religion of the senses’ which had ‘only in view the possession of outward and perishable blessings’; and their concept of immortality, ‘in so far as it was believed, appeared in the obscure distance like a shadow, a faint dream’.³⁹⁸ In contrast, the modern Christian nation is ‘taught by superior wisdom that man, through a high offence, forfeited the place for which he was originally destined; and that the whole of the object of his earthly existence is to strive to

³⁹⁴ Schlegel, I, 333-334.

³⁹⁵ Schlegel, I, 335.

³⁹⁶ Schlegel, I, 336.

³⁹⁷ Schlegel, I, 12.

³⁹⁸ Schlegel, I, 15.

regain that situation, which, if left to his own strength, he could never accomplish'; the Christian religion holds that 'every thing finite and mortal is lost in the contemplation of the infinite; life has become shadow and darkness, and the first dawning of our real existence opens beyond the grave'; and the Christian consciousness, or subject, knows 'that the happiness after which we strive we can never here attain; that no external object can ever fill our souls'.³⁹⁹ Only through the conflation with Christian doctrine is Classical aestheticism redeemed, or as Schlegel states, 'This sublime and beneficent religion has regenerated the ancient world from its state of exhaustion and debasement'.⁴⁰⁰

'The Domain of Arnheim'

Schlegel's project to express the nation's religious 'root' and reclaim humankind's 'originally destined' place is taken up by Poe in his essay-story, 'The Domain of Arnheim'. Poe originally wrote a much shorter version called 'The Landscape Garden' in 1842 and developed it into 'The Domain of Arnheim' for publication five years later.⁴⁰¹ This five year gap between the tale's original publication and later expansion implies that the ideas it expresses were important enough to Poe that he wished to refine and develop them in full. Indeed, in an 1848 letter to Helen Whitman Poe said that the latter version had much of his soul in it, and this speaks to the importance he attributes to landscape gardening in his own theories and principles.⁴⁰² It is useful to remember that while music and poetry are Poe's privileged media for expressing the poetic sentiment, he oddly extols the landscape garden, stating that 'very peculiarly, and with a wide field', the poetic sentiment can be developed through its 'composition'.⁴⁰³ Poe gives landscape gardening its 'wide field' in 'The Domain of Arnheim'. Significantly, of all other artistic media, Poe singles out landscape gardening as the only one requiring a condition for its expression of Beauty, namely, a 'wide field'. What this 'wide field' refers to is property, particularly land and financial wealth. In this regard, 'The Domain of Arnheim' is aligned more with its historical

³⁹⁹ Schlegel, I, 15.

⁴⁰⁰ Schlegel, I, 13.

⁴⁰¹ Thomas Ollive Mabbott, Introduction to 'The Domain of Arnheim', in *Collected Works of Edgar Allan Poe. Tales and Sketches. 1831-1842*, ed. by Thomas Ollive Mabbott, 3 vols (London: Belknap Press, 1978), II, pp. 700-702, (p. 700).

⁴⁰² Mabbott, Introduction to 'Domain', p. 701.

⁴⁰³ Poe, 'Poetic Principle', p. 204.

context than most of Poe's tales for the way it acknowledges property as necessary to the establishment of the self, as evidenced when it sets up the extreme wealth of the protagonist, Ellison, as the condition that enables him to transform the land into an expression of Beauty. Relating back to Poe's philosophies of the Beautiful, Ellison's transformation of property into Beauty means that property has the potential to not only facilitate the soul's elevation when the poet utilizes it to express the poetic sentiment, but, when considering the Neoplatonic links between the Beautiful and salvation, property also enables the poet to be the 'true man' who becomes conscious of his own immortal soul through the implicit communion with Christ and divinity, and who is therefore distinct from the 'earthy' men of Adam. Inversely again, the conditionality of property itself carries a condition: property on its own cannot enable the soul's elevation, but, rather, fulfils its vital conditionality only when it is utilized towards the end of achieving the Beautiful.

When Poe links property – particularly land – with the Beautiful he articulates what is for him the site where the constructed subject is naturalized by an essential and universal element. This conjoining of property and spirit is first implied in the narrator's initial description of Ellison: 'From his cradle to his grave a gale of prosperity bore my friend Ellison along. Nor do I use the word prosperity in its mere worldly sense. I mean it as synonymous with happiness'.⁴⁰⁴ For Poe, this possession of prosperity in both 'earthy' and unworldly forms creates an 'instance' of 'what has been deemed the chimera of the perfectionists'; that is, the embodiment of the 'true man', the national subject who possesses both Spirit and property to establish a whole, coherent self.⁴⁰⁵ Ellison's perfectibility is emphasized with an implied parallel with Christ, in that just as Christ is the Spirit made flesh, Ellison is the reification of a 'chimera' of 'perfection'. Poe denotes the 'true man', or 'true' national subject, as one possessing both property and Spirit first by describing the self without these vital conditions, and then limning the conditions that lead to perfectibility. First, Poe outlines this subjective lack through a negative comparison with Ellison:

In the brief existence of Ellison I fancy I have seen refuted the dogma, that in man's very nature lies some hidden principle, the antagonist of bliss. An anxious examination of his

⁴⁰⁴ Edgar Allan Poe, 'The Domain of Arnheim', in *The Complete Tales and Poems of Edgar Allan Poe* (New York: Vintage, 1975), pp. 604-615 (p. 604).

⁴⁰⁵ Poe, 'Domain', p. 604.

career has given me to understand that, in general, from the violation of a few simple laws of humanity arises the wretchedness of mankind – that as a species we have in our possession the as yet unwrought elements of content – and that, even now in the present darkness and madness of all thought on the great question of the social condition, it is not impossible that man, the individual, under certain unusual and highly fortuitous circumstances may be happy.⁴⁰⁶

Implied in this description of the ‘social condition’ is a subjective lack – termed the ‘hidden principle’ and ‘antagonist of bliss’ – that points to identity as partially artificial, constituted as a discursive pattern consisting of ‘dogma’ and the ‘violation of a few simple laws’. This discursiveness emphasizes identity as an epistemological – as well as theological and ideological – formation that immures the soul, or ‘yet unwrought elements of content’, against realizing its divinity, since it is the ‘social condition’ that violates the few ‘simple laws of humanity’. Keeping in line with his theories and philosophies described in the previous chapter, Poe’s presupposition with this formation is that there potentially *is* an essential element of humanity, a soul, but that it requires the right conditions in order for it to achieve this essentiality, or immortality.

Ellison outlines the conditions for the soul to achieve immortality in his ‘four elementary principles’, or ‘conditions, of bliss’.⁴⁰⁷ The first principle is the ‘purely physical one of free exercise in the open air’, which Ellison corroborates by pointing to the ‘tillers of the earth’ as the only people who, ‘as a class, can be fairly considered happier than others’.⁴⁰⁸ The second condition is ‘the love of woman’, the third is the ‘contempt of ambition’, and the fourth is an ‘object of unceasing pursuit’, with the ‘extent of attainable happiness’ being ‘in proportion to the spirituality of this object’.⁴⁰⁹ The soteriological idea of the Spirit’s unification with the earth is an organizing element in Ellison’s set of conditions: the second and fourth conditions recall Poe’s ideas about the soul’s elevation through Beauty and the Ideal, while the third relates to the transcendence of worldly gain in pursuit of the Ideal, as Poe explains when he notes that ‘while a high order of genius is necessarily ambitious, the highest is above that which is termed

⁴⁰⁶ Poe, ‘Domain’, p. 604.

⁴⁰⁷ Poe, ‘Domain’, p. 604.

⁴⁰⁸ Poe, ‘Domain’, p. 605.

⁴⁰⁹ Poe, ‘Domain’, p. 605.

ambition'.⁴¹⁰ The first condition pertaining to health by way of proximity to the land echoes the Fichtean influence on Jefferson's *Notes* about the national husbandman who gains his virility by working the soil. This group of 'conditions' establishes the 'zero degree' of subjectivity for Poe, the point where identity is naturalized not only through ownership of property, but through property as a vehicle to an Ideal that gives the self essentiality. As Poe explains, landscape gardening is 'the richest, the truest, and *most natural*, if not altogether the most extensive province' for expressing the Poetic sentiment.⁴¹¹ Like Locke's ideas of labour, this process of 'naturalization' works in two directions: the poetic sentiment invested into nature naturalizes the poet's essentiality against the artificial and totalizing aspects of the 'social condition'; and this investment of poetic labour also naturalizes the poet's criticism and aesthetic theories.

The artistic medium of landscape gardening has a naturalizing characteristic because it reverses the relationship between object and representation. As Poe explains, when the natural world is compared with painting or sculpture, we 'justly' 'regard nature as supreme'; and due to the fact no 'pictorial or sculptural combinations' can 'do more than approach the living and breathing beauty', any 'criticism which says, of sculpture or portraiture, that here nature is to be exalted or idealized rather than imitated, is in error'.⁴¹² Poe continues, 'no such combination of scenery exists in nature as the painter of genius may produce. No such paradises are to be found in reality as have glowed on the canvas of Claude. In the most enchanting of natural landscapes, there will always be found a defect or an excess'.⁴¹³ Unlike the painting 'of genius', the 'wide surface of the natural earth' has no position from which a critic will not find some offence with regards to its composition. Yet in landscape gardening 'the principle of the critic is true', because the poet imbues nature itself with the labour inspired by the 'poetic sentiment', transforming nature into supernal Beauty and sublimating the land closer to its lost divinity.⁴¹⁴ Again, these processes of self-creation, and of imbuing the land with a divinely-placed principle, recall Locke's ideas about property and the self; and this Lockean influence is evinced in Ellison's reasons for pursuing Beauty through landscape gardening:

⁴¹⁰ Poe, 'Domain', p. 607.

⁴¹¹ Poe, 'Poetic', p. 204, Poe, 'Domain', p. 607, emphasis added.

⁴¹² Poe, 'Domain', p. 608.

⁴¹³ Poe, 'Domain', p. 607.

⁴¹⁴ Poe, 'Domain', p. 608.

In the multiform and multicolour of the flower and trees, he recognized the most direct and energetic efforts of Nature at physical loveliness. And in the direction or concentration of this effort – or, more properly, in its adaptation to the eyes which were to behold the earth – he perceived that he should be employing the best means – labouring to the greatest advantage – in the fulfilment, not only of his own destiny as poet, but of the august purposes for which the Deity had implanted the poetic sentiment in man.⁴¹⁵

Ellison's idea of labouring to the 'greatest advantage' in order to fulfil the 'Deity's purpose' for placing the poetic sentiment within humankind conflates Locke's ideology with Poe's Neoplatonism. On one hand, Ellison's inspiration for landscape gardening is influenced by Locke's idea that 'God, who hath given the World to Men in common, hath also given them reason to make use of it to the best advantage of Life, and convenience'.⁴¹⁶ On the other, the way Ellison perceives the 'Deity's plan' as being fulfilled is structured by the theological duality between Adam and Christ, so that the 'poetic' labour invested into the land transubstantiates it into the forfeited earthly paradise promised to Adam by God. This transubstantiation is explained in Ellison's response to the narrator's inquiry of why 'geological disturbances' disrupt natural 'form and colour-grouping' and create flaws in the land that are 'abnormal and unadapted to any purpose'. Ellison's answer recalls the Adamic loss of Eden and subsequent fall into mortality: 'Admit the earthly immortality of man to be the first intention. We have then the primitive arrangement of the earth's surface adapted to his blissful estate, not as existent but designed. The disturbances were the preparations for his subsequently conceived deathful condition'.⁴¹⁷ Implicitly, Poe intermeshes labour inspired by the poetic sentiment with Locke's ideas about the establishing agency of labour to create both persons and property. The concatenation between the two ideologies is tied into their respective divine inherencies: the Lockean labour substantiates a divinely-placed 'property' in one's person to establish the self; and, in comparison, the poet's artistic labour as described in 'The Poetic Principle' also touches on divinity when it expresses Beauty, with this expression being contingent on an elevated soul that enables one to become a 'true man'. By correlating his own ideas about the poetic sentiment

⁴¹⁵ Poe, 'Domain', p. 607.

⁴¹⁶ Locke, 'Property', p. 286.

⁴¹⁷ Poe, 'Domain', p. 608.

with Locke's ideas about labour and property, Poe equalizes the artist's struggle for supernal Beauty with Locke's definition of labour as a facilitator of personhood and citizenship.

In keeping with his ideological background of 'genteel patriarchy', Poe ascribes an importance to land, particularly once it is invested with labour inspired by the poetic sentiment; and this importance for Poe is given in the final outcome of Ellison's project. That the inspiration of Ellison's labour derives from the poetic sentiment is stated in his description as a poet in 'the widest and noblest sense' who comprehends 'the true character, the august aims, the supreme majesty and dignity of the poetic sentiment', and who 'instinctively' feels that 'the sole proper satisfaction of this sentiment' lies in 'the creation of noble forms of beauty'.⁴¹⁸ That the poetic sentiment compels his desire to transform the landscape is stated in his assertion of an 'incontrovertible' principle that signals the possibility of 'something beyond', and that 'an object' may exist 'in keeping with the principle'. Although such an object is 'unattainable by the means ordinarily possessed by individuals', if attained, it would 'lend a charm to the landscape-garden far surpassing that which a sense of merely human interest could bestow'. What these extraordinary 'means' Ellison refers to are 'very unusual pecuniary resources'; and the 'principle' he mentions is the conveyance of 'the sentiment of spiritual interference'.⁴¹⁹ In a passage that ties together several thematic strands, Ellison describes at length the investment of nature with the poetic sentiment through labour:

In the most rugged of wildernesses – in the most savage of the scenes of pure nature – there is apparent the *art* of a creator; yet this art is apparent to reflection only; in no respect has it the obvious force of a feeling. Now let us suppose this sense of the Almighty design to be *one step depressed* – to be brought into something like harmony or consistency with the sense of human art – to form an intermedium between the two: – let us imagine, for example, a landscape whose combined vastness and definitiveness – whose united beauty, magnificence, and *strangeness*, shall convey the idea of care, or culture, or superintendence, on the part of beings superior, yet akin to humanity – then the sentiment of *interest* is preserved, while the art interwoven is made to assume the air of an intermediate or secondary nature – a nature which is not God, nor an emanation

⁴¹⁸ Poe, 'Domain', p. 606.

⁴¹⁹ Poe, 'Domain', p. 610.

from God, but which still is nature in the sense of the handiwork of the angels that hover between man and God.⁴²⁰

Again, the artistic labour produces a sublimation, and this elevating process is described within a Neoplatonic framework, with the idea that the world is a Platonic Creator's 'art', or handiwork, converging with tropes of humankind's fall from immortality. With the abasement of the Creator's world, its 'art' becomes apparent to 'reflection only', and not 'feeling', suggesting that the land's essentiality is still 'mortal' and 'unelevated', and for this reason it cannot elevate one's soul through 'feeling' towards Beauty. This correlation of essence with 'feeling' refers back to the narrator's earlier statement, 'in landscape alone is the principle of the critic true' – a principle qualified by the way the critic feels 'its truth'. As the narrator explains, 'the feeling is no affectation or chimera'; not even 'mathematics' can 'afford' a 'more absolute' demonstration 'than the sentiment' that 'art yields the artist'. The critic 'not only believes, but positively knows, that such and such apparently arbitrary arrangements of matter constitute and alone constitute the true beauty'.⁴²¹ Reflecting Locke's paradigm of property creation, the poetic labour invested into the land transforms both the land and the labourer, raising the land to an 'intermediate or secondary nature' between earth and God, and affecting the critic's 'feeling', validating and sublimating an essential component self that is 'absolute' and 'positively' known. It is the artistic labour that sublimates the land and puts it back in Platonic 'harmony' with the 'Almighty design', so that it is 'one step depressed', and, like the intermediary elements of air and water, the art becomes an intermediary between the earth and the spirit. 'Magnificence', a term Poe uses in relation to property, particularly property with a false spiritual aspect, is combined with Beauty, and its suggestions of spirituality beyond the material world, so that the world – in an anti-patheistic vein – is not God, nor an emanation from God, but can gesture toward a spiritual realm and affirm humanity's divine essentiality through artistic labour.⁴²²

The artist's ability to imbue the land with his property of the transubstantiating 'poetic sentiment', or the 'diversity' of his 'faculties' from which his 'rights of property originate', derives from an elevated soul that makes him so little 'of the earth, earthy'; and this elevated soul

⁴²⁰ Poe, 'Domain', pp. 610-611.

⁴²¹ Poe, 'Domain', p. 608.

⁴²² For Poe's meaning of the term, 'magnificence', see Edgar Allan Poe, 'The Philosophy of Furniture', in *The Complete Tales and Poems of Edgar Allan Poe* (New York: Vintage, 1975), pp. 462-466 (p. 462).

is emphasized in Ellison in the way that he meets the second of his conditions for happiness, namely, 'the sympathy of a woman, not unwomanly, whose loveliness and love' envelop 'his existence in the purple atmosphere of Paradise'.⁴²³ Used to describe a condition that elevates the soul through Beauty, Paradise also refers to the Edenic state before Adam's fall, so that Poe connects the transubstantiation of the land to love and the Spirit. This intermeshing of earth and Spirit is evinced in the theme of Ellison's art and in the final vision of reified Beauty.

Arnheim, the extensive realm of Ellison's landscape garden, is a large allegory of the immortal soul's journey through life, death, and into a union with God, with all its imagery figuring the soteriological progress. A structuring trope for this journey is Schlegel's idea about bounded and unbounded representations: the river transporting the narrator through Arnheim initially takes 'a thousand turns, so that at no moment' can its 'gleaming surface be seen for a greater distance than a furlong', and at 'every instant' the boat is 'imprisoned within an enchanted circle' made up of 'insuperable and impenetrable' walls of foliage and a roof of 'ultra-marine satin'.⁴²⁴ Bounded temporally by the clock-like 'enchanted circle' of the 'instant', and sensibly by knowledge gained in increments, the initial leg of the narrator's journey characterizes the empirical delimitations associated with the physical, 'earthy' life. Connected to these tropes are spiritual ones: the boat's reflection lies on the water like a 'phantom bark' floating 'in constant company with the substantial one, for the purpose of sustaining it' over the void-like river, whose 'transparency' creates the illusion of 'no floor', thereby suggesting how the immortal spirit preserves the self from the oblivion of death.⁴²⁵

The immortal soul's preservation through death is represented again when the boat enters a grave-like chasm with high walls inclined together to obscure the daylight, and 'long plume-like moss' descending from the 'shrubberies overhead' to create 'an air of funereal gloom', before it turns suddenly, 'as if dropped from heaven', into a basin, where the narrator is confronted with 'the full orb of the declining sun' forming 'the sole termination of an otherwise limitless vista'.⁴²⁶ The basin's 'limitless vista' recalls Schlegel's ideas of the boundless scene that connotes 'what is least corporeal, namely, light and air', and this allusion to the Holy Spirit is suggested again by the fact that vista's 'sole termination' is the sun, a symbol for Christ,

⁴²³ Poe, 'Domain', p. 611.

⁴²⁴ Poe, 'Domain', p. 612.

⁴²⁵ Poe, 'Domain', p. 612.

⁴²⁶ Poe, 'Domain', pp. 613-614, Brooks, p. 13.

thereby suggesting a union of the earth with the Spirit. Indeed, the epigram to 'The Domain of Arnheim' is a quote from Giles Fletcher's 'Christ's Victorie on Earth', with its comparison between the 'garden' and a 'lady' further suggesting the idea of the earth's union with the Spirit through love.⁴²⁷ Soteriological tropes emerge again when the narrator's boat is exchanged for 'a light canoe of ivory', symbolizing the transubstantiation of the earthly into a spiritual self, as well as when the canoe proceeds by its own volition towards the sun, implying the immortal soul's innate desire for union with God through love and the Spirit. As the canoe moves towards the sun, the narrator hears the 'divinest melody' of 'soothing yet melancholy music' coming from an 'unseen origin', suggesting in Platonic language the world placed in gained harmony with its 'sphere', while the attainment of heaven is represented by the 'gigantic gate or rather door of burnished gold, elaborately carved and fretted, and reflecting the direct rays of the now fast-sinking sun with an effulgence that seems to wreath the whole surrounding forest in flames'.⁴²⁸ Finally, the voyage culminates in an amphitheatre replete with signifiers of beauty similar to those listed in 'The Poetic Principle': 'there is a dream-like intermingling to the eye of tall slender Eastern trees – bosky shrubberies – flocks of golden and crimson birds – lily-fringed lakes – meadows of violets, tulips, poppies, hyacinths, and tube-roses', and the perfume of a 'strange sweet odour', thereby suggesting how the land is infused with the poetic sentiment.⁴²⁹ Inter-articulated with these tropes of Paradise are those of property and magnificence: not only are the gates of heaven made from 'burnished gold', but the 'surrounding forest' is described as 'rudely and luxuriantly wooded', and basin's shores are covered in 'gorgeous flower-blossoms' that resemble 'rubies, sapphires, opals, and golden onyxes, rolling silently out of the sky'.⁴³⁰ The final result of the conflation between beauty and property is the 'mass' of 'architecture' 'sustaining itself by a miracle in mid-air; glittering in the red sunlight with a hundred oriels, minarets, and pinnacles; and seeming the phantom handiwork, conjointly, of the Sylphs, of the Fairies, of the Genii, and of the Gnomes'.⁴³¹ In other words, the union of property and Beauty establishes a visible representation of the Spirit, suggesting how the poetic sentiment invested into the land through labour leads to the religious 'root', or Ideality, of the land. While the

⁴²⁷ Thomas Ollive Mabbott, Notes to 'The Domain of Arnheim', in *Collected Works of Edgar Allan Poe. Tales and Sketches. 1831-1842*, ed. by Thomas Ollive Mabbott, 3 vols (London: Belknap Press, 1978), pp. 712-713 (p. 712).

⁴²⁸ Poe, 'Domain', p. 615.

⁴²⁹ Poe, 'Domain', p. 615.

⁴³⁰ Poe, 'Domain', pp. 614, 613.

⁴³¹ Poe, 'Domain', p. 615.

majority of Poe's tales have a religious theme, the actual illustration of the reified Spirit is uncommon, and its depiction in 'The Domain' signals the importance Poe assigns to the union of land with the poetic sentiment. Furthermore, its appearance reflects back on the idealness of Ellison, and points out how Poe lends perfectibility to the subject with both property and the poetic sentiment.

The image of the floating 'architecture' also reflects Ellison's idealness and elevated soul, and this idealness gains resonance when referring back to Schlegel's *Lectures*. Schlegel located the essence of Greek tragedy in the idealness of its characters. In using the term 'ideal' Schlegel denotes how the manners of the Greek tragic characters are 'always elevated above reality', with their 'ideality of the representation' consisting 'in the elevation to a higher sphere'. As Schlegel explains, the aim of Greek tragedy is to 'separate the image of humanity' from 'the ground of nature to which man is in reality chained down, like a feudal slave', and he puts forward two rhetorical questions to explain his argument: 'How was this to be accomplished? By exhibiting to us an image hovering in the air'? While such an exhibition of Ideality is 'incompatible with the law of gravitation and with the earthly materials of which our bodies are framed', the Greeks succeed in combining 'ideality with reality' to display 'an elevation more than human with all the truth of life, and all the energy of bodily qualities'.⁴³² In relating the 'architecture' floating in the air to Ellison's landscape garden, Poe not only implies that the imbuelement of property with the poetic sentiment elevates the land 'above reality', making it 'one step depressed' from God's design, but that the property Ellison invests in the land through labour is that of his own soul elevated through love and the Spirit; and this unity between earth and a 'higher sphere' is underscored by the mythical Sylphs, Fairies, Genii, and Gnomes associated respectively with the Platonic elements of water, air, fire, and earth, thereby implying the union between earth and heaven.

Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to show how Poe figures national Ideality in the Jacksonian context. 'The Oblong Box', expresses Poe's perception of Jacksonian subjects as 'more dead than alive' in the sense that they are 'artificial', or 'mere surface without any internal

⁴³² Schlegel, I, 72-73.

substance' in that they lack an essence elevated by the Neoplatonic ideas of love, Beauty, and the Spirit; and this lack of personal essence reflects the national root's replacement by property, or merchandise. Schlegel's *Lectures* flesh out and provide much of the contextualizing philosophy that structures how Poe determines national Ideality and its relation to national expressions of art, while analysis of Poe's 'The Domain of Arnheim' shows how Poe attempts to locate national ideality through an investment of the poetic sentiment into the landscape through labour. Having now examined how Poe draws an Ideal relationship between national subjectivity and national territory, the following chapter will focus on Poe's conceptualizations of Native Americans, looking at 'Morning on the Wissahiccon' and 'The Masque of the Red Death', as well as some selections of Poe's criticism.

Chapter Four: 'Of the Earth, Earthy': Sympathy, Displacement and Poe's Depictions of Native Americans

Leon Jackson observes that while a great deal of criticism is engaged in 'determining the precise nature' of Poe's attitudes towards African-Americans and slavery, 'no such debate is necessary' to determine that his attitudes towards Native Americans 'was fairly consistently negative, based, as it was, on a rejection of the noble savage ideal. Indeed, he typically painted them as bloodthirsty and violent'.⁴³³ Jackson corroborates this argument by alluding to the 'half-breed' Dirk Peters from *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym*, who is described by the narrator as 'one of the most purely ferocious-looking men I ever beheld', and the Sioux of *The Journal of Julius Rodman*, who are 'our enemies at heart' and 'an ugly ill-made race . . . according to our ideas of the human form'.⁴³⁴ However, while Poe rejects the noble savage ideal, his attitude towards Native Americans is still complicated, straddling as it does the ideas of Indians as objects of sympathy and as inherently irrational and inferior. Poe's ambivalent attitude towards Native Americans makes even Jackson's corroborating examples problematic: the editor in 'Rodman' calls the Sioux Rodman's 'bugbears *par excellence*', implying an irrational fear, and after escaping live burial on Tsalal Pym calls Peters one of the 'only living white men' on the island, gesturing to inclusivity and assimilation – a gesture similar to Prospero's claim on Caliban, 'this thing of darkness, I | Acknowledge mine'.⁴³⁵ Pym's claim on Peters is underscored when considering how seven years before *Pym*'s publication Supreme Court Justice John Marshall described tribal governments in *Cherokee Nation v. Georgia* as 'domestic dependent nations' – a paradoxical term, because the definition of tribal governments as 'nations' by the Supreme Court acknowledges their sovereign, independent status. Yet the referents, 'domestic'

⁴³³ Leon Jackson, "'Behold Our Literary Mohawk, Poe": Literary Nationalism and the "Indianation" of Antebellum American Culture', *ESQ*, 1 (2002), 97-113 (p. 113).

⁴³⁴ Jackson, p. 113.

⁴³⁵ Edgar Allan Poe, *The Journal of Julius Rodman. Being an Account of the First Passage Across the Rocky Mountains of North America Ever Achieved by Civilized Man*, <http://www.eapoe.org/WORKS/TALES/rodma1.htm>, [20/12/2006] (p. 21), Burton R. Pollin, 'Poe's Semiambiguous Creation of Bugaboo, Both Proper Noun and Common Noun', *Comments on Etymology*, 26 (1997), 7-12 (p. 7), Poe, *Pym*, p. 212, William Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2002), 5. 1. 273-274.

and ‘dependent’, also mean that they are incorporated within, and the responsibility of, the United States.⁴³⁶

A starting point for understanding Poe’s attitudes towards Native Americans is one of his lesser-known tales, ‘Morning on the Wissahiccon’ or ‘The Elk’, because it illustrates an American claim on Native American territories as a claim on Native Americans themselves. Originally published in *The Opal for 1844* as a companion piece for J.G. Chapman’s picture of an elk in romantic scenery entitled ‘Morning’, the tale itself has an ironic tone: while boating along the Wissahiccon River, a nameless narrator revels in visions ‘of the “good old days” when the Demon of the Engine was not, when pic-nics were undreamed of, when “water privileges” were neither bought nor sold, and when the red man trod alone, with the elk, upon the ridges that now towered above’.⁴³⁷ While revelling, the narrator immediately sees his vision reified as ‘one of the oldest and boldest of those identical elks which had been coupled with the red men’ of his imagination, and his ‘whole soul’ becomes ‘bound up in intense sympathy’ for the elk, which he imagines to be ‘repining, not less than wondering, at the manifest alterations for the worse, wrought upon the brook and its vicinage, even within the last few years, by the stern hand of the utilitarian’. The ‘romance’ of the vision comes crashing down though when an African-American servant emerges from the thickets to catch the elk: ‘the noble animal, although a little fluttered, made no attempt at escape. The negro advanced; offered the salt; and spoke a few words of encouragement or conciliation. Presently, the elk bowed and stamped, and then lay quietly down and was secured with a halter’. The tale concludes with the explanation that the elk is ‘a *pet* of great age and very domestic habits’ belonging to an ‘English family occupying a villa in the vicinity’.⁴³⁸

The metaphoric significance of the elk and its domesticity can be understood by comparing the descriptive similarities between ‘Morning’ and ‘The Poetic Principle’. In ‘Morning’, the narrator’s description of the Louisiana Valley’s ‘gentle undulations of soil, interwreathed with fantastic crystallic streams, gigantic, glossy, multicoloured, sparkling with gay birds and burthened with perfume’ parallels the ‘simple elements’ that induce the ‘true

⁴³⁶ Bergland, p. 13.

⁴³⁷ Thomas Ollive Mabbott, Notes for ‘Morning on the Wissahiccon’, in *Collected Works of Edgar Allan Poe*, ed. by Thomas Ollive Mabbott, 3 vols (London: Belknap Press, 1978), III, 860-861 (p. 860), Edgar Allan Poe, ‘Morning on the Wissahiccon’, or ‘The Elk’, in in *Collected Works of Edgar Allan Poe*, ed. by Thomas Ollive Mabbott, 3 vols (London: Belknap Press, 1978), III, 861-866 (pp. 865-866).

⁴³⁸ Poe, ‘Morning’, pp. 865-866.

poetic effect' in 'The Poetic Principle', such as 'clustering of low shrubberies', 'the twinkling of half-hidden brooks', 'the songs of the birds', 'the gleaming of silver rivers', etc., thereby describing the valley in terms of Beauty.⁴³⁹ The narrator of 'Morning' even states, 'The most gorgeous imagination might derive suggestions from its exuberant beauty. And *beauty* is, indeed, its sole character. It has little, or rather nothing, of the sublime'.⁴⁴⁰ This distinction between Beauty and the sublime points to Burkean ideas, as well as those laid out by Poe in 'The Domain of Arnheim'. Part of Burke's definition of the sublime is the heightened feelings of awe, solemnity, and terror that accompany being in the presence of God; and, as Poe describes in 'The Domain of Arnheim', this nearness to God through the land requires an investment of labour inspired by the poetic sentiment.⁴⁴¹ However, this poetic investment into the landscape can never occur. As the narrator observes: 'Now the Wissahiccon is of so remarkable a loveliness that, were it flowing in England, it would be the theme of every bard, and the common topic of every tongue, if, indeed, its banks were not parcelled off in lots, at an exorbitant price, as building sites for villas of the opulent'.⁴⁴² The Wissahiccon's potential to elevate the soul through Beauty, as the 'theme of every bard', is curtailed by its transformation into property, or 'parcelled lots'. In other words, the transformation of nature into property prohibits its potential for sublimity through poetic labour as well as the soul's elevation through Beauty.

The image of the elk 'secured with an halter' is metaphoric for the philosophical ideas that inform 'Morning'. Just as the Wissahiccon's ability to elevate the soul is curtailed by its transformation into parcelled lots, the narrator's 'whole soul' is 'bound up' with what turns out to be property. Furthermore, the ownership of the elk by an 'English family' implies that the Wissahiccon's transformation into merchandise causes the obfuscation of the national 'root'. At the same time, though, the elk, 'coupled with the red men', is also metaphoric for Native Americans, and this tropic connection is underscored by analogous terminology used to describe the '*pet*' of 'very domestic habits' and the 'domestic dependent nations'. Further, the elk's status, as owned property, points to American ownership over Native American lands. Poe's positioning of the elk as a metaphor for both the land's potential to create Beauty and as 'the Indian' gestures toward an important conflation and incorporation. Specifically, the ability

⁴³⁹ Poe, 'Morning', pp. 862, 'Poetic', p. 907.

⁴⁴⁰ Poe, 'Morning', p. 863.

⁴⁴¹ Burke, pp. 68-69.

⁴⁴² Poe, 'Morning', p. 863.

to locate and express the nation's Spiritual 'root' is contingent on the displacement of Native Americans in order to inherit their rightful and certain ownership of the land. For Poe, this displacement is marked by an element of 'intense sympathy' towards Native Americans, but it is also grounded in the belief of the tribal populations' inherent irrationality and inferiority. Poe's ambivalent sympathy toward Native Americans can be evinced in his criticism as well, particularly his argument to change the name of America to Appalachia. On one hand, he argues that the name does honour to the 'Aborigines, whom, hitherto, we have at all points unmercifully despoiled, assassinated, and dishonoured'; on the other, he notes that Appalachia is not only 'indigenous, springing from one of the most magnificent and distinctive features of the country itself', but – and 'by far the most truly important consideration of all' – it has an inherent 'music': 'nothing could be more sonorous, more liquid, or of fuller volume, while its length is just sufficient for dignity'.⁴⁴³ In arguing for a name that is 'musical', Poe seeks an expression of the nation's Spiritual root, or Ideality, that puts it in touch with its 'sphere'; and one of the prerequisites for finding this 'root' is that it is 'indigenous', 'springing from' the 'country itself'. That is, the 'soul' of the nation is found in its indigeneity; and this process of claiming indigeneity involves honoring the 'Aborigines', because the act of 'honouring', or memorializing, the tribal populations can also imply that they are no longer a threat and safely out of the way of territorial expansion.

As Dana Nelson notes, rationality as a trait was strategically denied to Native American populations in order to justify Anglo-American appropriation of the continent; and part of Poe's justification for negating tribal claims to the national territory can be found in the Neoplatonic conceptualizations of identity he subscribes to.⁴⁴⁴ As Plato explains in the *Timaeus*, the human immortal soul is a small component of the World Soul, and this close connection between the human and World souls enables the immortal human soul to have reason and identify Ideality. As Plato explains, to ensure that no irrational creatures should be more fair than the rational, and that reason cannot 'belong to any apart from Soul', the Architect constructs 'reason within soul and soul within body'.⁴⁴⁵ As the World Soul moves through the universe in its human body it touches upon things of substance, and 'announces', without speech or sound, 'what the object is identical with and from what it is different, and in what relation, where and how and when, it

⁴⁴³ Poe, *Marginalia*, pp. 350-351.

⁴⁴⁴ Nelson, pp. 81-83.

⁴⁴⁵ Plato, *Timaeus*, p. 55.

comes about that each thing exists and is acted upon both in the sphere of the Becoming and in that of the ever-uniform'. When its announcements are concerned with the sensible and mutable, then 'opinions and beliefs arise which are firm and true'; and when the Soul touches on the Ideal, then reason and knowledge of necessity result.⁴⁴⁶

Echoing Platonic discourse, Augustine's Pauline-inflected spirit-body binary emerges against the philosophical background of a World Soul that endows the human soul with rationality while remaining itself ideal. For Augustine, this Platonic World Soul, which exists both materially and ideally and imbues the human mind with reason, is associated with God, who is also of a material and ideal nature, and is the Architect 'not only of this visible world', but 'of every soul whatsoever', existing 'above all that is of the nature of the soul', and bestowing 'blessedness to the rational soul' through 'participation in His own unchangeable and incorporeal light'.⁴⁴⁷ The Pauline binary of the body and soul, and the human soul's connection with the World Soul, or God, are rephrased by Augustine into the terms 'body' and 'life'. Augustine says the Platonists consider that 'whatever *is* is either body or life', with the nature of the body being 'sensible', or perceived by the sight and touch of the body, and that of life being 'intelligible', meaning understood by the 'sight of the mind'. The Platonists prefer the 'intelligible nature to the sensible' because they understand that 'there is no corporeal beauty', whether in its form or action, of 'which it is not the mind that judges'; and this ability to form judgement 'could never have been, had there not existed in the mind itself a superior form of these things, without bulk, without noise of voice, without space and time'.⁴⁴⁸ While the mind's mutability enables it to grow and become more discerning, this same mutability leads to the belief 'that the first form is not to be found in those things whose form is changeable'; rather it is a 'first form' not 'admitting of degrees of comparison', a 'first principle of things', which is 'not made', but by which 'all things' are made.⁴⁴⁹

The spiritual connection between the immortal human soul and God, which enables rationality and the ability to recognize the Ideal, does not generally apply to Native Americans in Poe's fiction and criticism, as is evinced by the way he presents them as incapable of the poetic expression that could elevate the soul towards Ideality. In his review of *Legends of a Log Cabin*

⁴⁴⁶ Plato, *Timaeus*, p. 75.

⁴⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 306.

⁴⁴⁸ Augustine, p. 315.

⁴⁴⁹ Augustine, p. 316.

Poe asserts that while ‘The Wyandot’s Story’ is good ‘we have fault to find, likewise, with the phraseology in this instance. No Indian, let Chateaubriand and others say what they please, ever indulged, for half an hour at a time, in the disjointed and hyperbolic humbug here attributed to the Wyandot’.⁴⁵⁰ Poe’s reasons for discrediting the idea of an Indian speaking longer than ‘half an hour’ are elaborated somewhat in his review of C.F. Hoffman’s poem about ‘two Indian chiefs [who] are rivals in love’:

The descriptive portions are particularly good, but the author erred, first, in narrating the story in the first person, and secondly, in putting into the mouth of the narrator language and sentiments above the nature of an Indian. I say that the narration should not have been in the first person, because, although an Indian may and does fully experience a thousand delicate shades of sentiment (the whole idea of the story is essentially sentimental), still he has, clearly, no capacity for their various *expression*. Mr. Hoffman’s hero is made to discourse very much after the manner of Rousseau.⁴⁵¹

For Rousseau, man in his natural, ‘savage’ state is not necessarily good, but is not bad precisely because he does not ‘know what it is to be good; because it is neither the development of the understanding nor the restraint of the law that hinders [him] from doing ill’, but rather a ‘peacefulness’ of ‘passions’ and an ‘ignorance of vice’.⁴⁵² The primary element that defines the border between civilized and natural man is property. As Rousseau states, ‘the first man who, having enclosed a piece of ground, took it into his head to say “This is mine”, and found people simple enough to believe him, was the real founder of civil society’. This development towards civilization engenders negative outcomes because the accumulation of property means an increase of competition on one hand, ‘and conflicting interest on the other, together with a secret desire on both of profiting at the expense of others. All these evils were the first effects of property and the inseparable attendants of growing inequality’. Usurpations and robberies

⁴⁵⁰ Edgar Allan Poe, ‘Legends of a Log Cabin. By a Western Man. New York: George Dearborn, Publisher’, in *The Complete Works of Edgar Allan Poe*, ed. by James A. Harrison, 17 vols (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell & Company, 1902), VIII, 120-122 (p. 121).

⁴⁵¹ Edgar Allan Poe, ‘Charles Fenno Hoffman’, in *The Works of Edgar Allan Poe in Eight Volumes*, 8 vols (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott Company, 1905), VIII, (pp. 189-193) p. 190-191.

⁴⁵² Jean-Jacques Rousseau, ‘Inequality’, in *The Indispensable Rousseau*, ed. by John Hope Mason, (London: Quartet Books, 1979), pp. 50-72, (p.57).

accompany the struggle to claim property, resulting in a suppression of compassion and increase in vice.⁴⁵³

Poe refutes the Rousseauian ideal of originary man in his natural, savage state in *Marginalia*:

The theorizers on Government, who pretend always to ‘begin at the beginning’, commence with man in what they call his *natural* state – the savage. What right have they to suppose this his natural state? Man’s chief idiosyncrasy being reason, it follows that his savage condition, his condition of action *without* reason – is his *unnatural* state. The more he reasons the nearer he approaches the position to which his chief idiosyncrasy irresistibly impels him; and not until he attains this position with exactitude – not until his reason has exhausted itself for his improvement – not until he has stepped upon the highest pinnacle of civilisation – will his *natural* state be ultimately reached, or thoroughly determined.⁴⁵⁴

For Poe, civilized man marked by reason is mankind’s ‘natural’ state, and this pertains back to Adam’s fall, which was a relinquishment of humankind’s original, ‘natural’ immortality that Christ’s resurrection rectified. The closer union with God, or the World Soul, intrinsically involves a move to greater reason. Poe rejects Rousseau’s notion that the primary distinction between civilized man and savagery is merely one of physical property, and he opts for a philosophy that naturalizes man’s civilized state and locates racial difference in inherent ‘spiritual’ deficiencies connected with an inability for ‘expression’. Looking back to ‘The Poetic Principle’, Poe notes that ‘the struggle to apprehend the supernal Loveliness’ is a struggle ‘on the part of souls fittingly constituted’; and such ‘fittingly constituted’ souls are not found amongst Poe’s depictions of Native Americans: again, while ‘an Indian may and does fully experience a thousand delicate shades of sentiment’ he has ‘no capacity for their various *expression*’. In other words, ‘savages’ are unable to attain divinity, or the ‘Beauty above’ because they do not have the

⁴⁵³ Rousseau, pp. 59-61.

⁴⁵⁴ Poe, *Marginalia*, p. 476.

inherent capability for expression, and in being unable to express themselves they remain, in a sense, ‘of the earth, earthy’.⁴⁵⁵

Poe’s conception of Native Americans being ‘of the earth’ finds its corroboration in Shakespeare’s character, Caliban. Poe makes allusion to *The Tempest* in both ‘The Man That Was Used Up’, through the namesake of Miranda Cognoscenti, and in ‘The Masque of the Red Death’, with the Red Death being a reference to Caliban’s curse on Prospero and Miranda in *The Tempest*, ‘The red plague rid you | For learning me your language’.⁴⁵⁶ While Caliban is not specifically Native American, much incidental evidence ties him to the aboriginal tribes of the Americas. Setebos, the god of Caliban’s mother, is described in the account of Magellan’s expedition as ‘a great devil of the Patagonians’, and by worshipping him, ‘Sycorax is identified with the most remote, God-forsaken and degenerate of sixteenth-century Amerindian types’.⁴⁵⁷ Trinculo associates Caliban with ‘Indians’ when stating that in England ‘There would this monster make a man; any strange beast there makes a man. When they will not give a doit to relieve a lame beggar, they will lay out ten to see a dead Indian’.⁴⁵⁸ As well, Caliban’s complaint of usurpation finds an analogy in Anglo-America’s relationship with its aboriginal tribes:

The island’s mine by Sycorax my mother,
Which thou tak’st from me [. . . .]
All the charms
Of Sycorax – toads, beetles, bats – light on you!
For I am all the subjects that you have,
Which first was mine own king; and here you sty me
In this hard rock, whiles you do keep from me
The rest o’th’island.⁴⁵⁹

Caliban also is congruent with Poe’s philosophy because he is a savage who is inherently incapable of elevating himself above baseness: Miranda calls him an ‘Abhorred slave, / Which

⁴⁵⁵ Poe, ‘Poetic’, p. 894.

⁴⁵⁶ Poe, ‘The Man’, p. 408, Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, 1. 2. 363-364.

⁴⁵⁷ John Gillies in David Lindley, Footnotes for *The Tempest* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2002), p. 120.

⁴⁵⁸ Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, 2. 2. 27-30.

⁴⁵⁹ Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, 1. 2. 332-344.

any print of goodness wilt not take', and Prospero even refers to him as 'Thou earth, thou!'.⁴⁶⁰ The correlation of Caliban with the earth occurs not only in the play itself, but in its surrounding criticism. In *Characters of Shakespeare's Plays* William Hazlitt says of Caliban:

Shakespeare has described the brutal mind of Caliban in contact with the pure and original forms of nature; the character grows out of the soil where it is rooted uncontrolled, uncouth and wild, uncramped by any of the meannesses of custom. It is 'of the earth, earthy'. It seems almost to have been dug out of the ground, with a soul instinctively superadded to it answering to its wants and origin.⁴⁶¹

Although Poe reviewed *Characters of Shakespeare's Plays* in 1845, two years after 'The Masque of the Red Death's' original publication, the first edition of Hazlitt's work was published in 1817, and as Kevin J. Hayes notes, Poe likely read essayists such as William Hazlitt, Leigh Hunt, and Charles Lamb to supplement his early education.⁴⁶² In his 1845 review of *Characters of Shakespeare's Plays* Poe praises the author, asserting that 'If anything could induce us to read anything more in the way of commentary on Shakespeare, it would be the name of Hazlitt prefixed. With his hackneyed theme he has done wonders, and those wonders well'. Yet however referring to Hazlitt as a 'genius' Poe also invalidates him with slight praise, stating, 'for purposes of mere amusement, he is the best commentator who ever wrote in English', and 'take away the innumerable foibles of Hunt and Hazlitt, and we should have the anomaly of finding them more diminutive than we fancy them while the foibles remain'.⁴⁶³ One of these 'foibles' for Poe would be the Rousseauian slant inflecting Hazlitt's interpretation of Caliban's vulgarity: 'Vulgarity is not natural courseness, but conventional courseness, learnt from others, contrary to, or without an entire conformity of natural power and disposition'.⁴⁶⁴ Yet despite such 'foibles', Hazlitt's interpretation of Caliban holds a 'keystone' position in the overall discourse Poe constructs around the figure of the Indian. Specifically, it corroborates his theory that the soul of the 'savage' is incapable of elevation, being 'superadded' in answering to the wants and needs of

⁴⁶⁰ Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, 1. 2. 352-353, 1. 2. 314.

⁴⁶¹ William Hazlitt, *Characters of Shakespeare's Plays*, (New York: Oxford UP, 1951), p. 91.

⁴⁶² Kevin J. Hayes, *Poe and the Printed Word*, (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2000), p. 7.

⁴⁶³ Poe, Edgar Allan, 'Wiley and Putnam's Library of Choice Reading. No. XVII. The Characters of Shakespeare. By William Hazlitt', in *The Complete Works of Edgar Allan Poe*, ed. by James A. Harrison, 17 vols (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell & Company, 1902), XII, pp. 226-228 (p. 226).

⁴⁶⁴ Hazlitt, p. 91.

a creature ‘of the earth’. When we consider the more spiritual aspects of being ‘of the earth’ against the incorporative displacement indicated in ‘Morning on the Wissahiccon’, in which an undisputed Anglo-American inheritance of the land is necessary to invest it with the labour of the poetic sentiment, then we see that being ‘of the earth’ has two meanings in relation to Native Americans: it refers to a spiritual condition, but also a more literal one, a condition of being a principle of the national ‘earth’ that must be incorporated.

‘The Masque of the Red Death’

Utilizing methodologies put forward in previous chapters alongside discussion of Poe’s mixed attitudes of sympathy and condescension towards Native Americans enables interpretive access to ‘The Masque of the Red Death’. While ‘The Masque’ is obviously a tale about morality and sympathy, as indicated when Prospero shuts out the Red Death and the ‘impulses of despair’ from his castellated abbey, the allusion in its title to Caliban’s curse also lends the tale a colonial context that is not considered in its surrounding criticism by suggesting that the sympathy disregarded in ‘The Masque’ is at least partially metaphoric for America’s lack of sympathy toward its Native American populations.⁴⁶⁵ The specific focus of this subsection is to analyse how this lack of sympathy is justified by an epistemology, particularly a pantheistic, Transcendental epistemology, that puts forth a knowable, absolute morality and spirituality that blocks an authentic union of God through the Holy Spirit. Finally, this subsection will consider how this Spiritual lack is tied to the putrescent and disarticulate body.

Hubert Zapf observes that several story elements in ‘The Masque’ draw heavily ‘on modes of story-telling which seem to belong to a distant past rather than to the contemporary context of Poe’s own literary and cultural world’, and he poses the questions: ‘What is the reason for this historical distancing, this aesthetic anachronism in the literary method of the story? What is its function in the overall composition of the text?’⁴⁶⁶ These questions may be approached by considering the ideologies of immutability and certainty that underpin the masque

⁴⁶⁵ Edgar Allan Poe, ‘The Masque of the Red Death’, in *The Complete Tales and Poems of Edgar Allan Poe*, (New York: Vintage Books, 1975), pp. 269-273 (p. 269).

⁴⁶⁶ Hubert Zapf, ‘Entropic Imagination in Poe’s “The Masque of the Red Death”’, *College Literature*, 16.3 (1989), 211-218 (p. 212).

structure. Consideration of this structure provides a framework for which to analyse 'The Masque'.

As David Lindley explains, the Renaissance masque is usually a celebration in honour of an event or monarch, central to which is the arrival of a group of intricately disguised nobles, known as the antimasque, who proceed to involve members from the main court audience in a specially designed and highly rehearsed communal dance. The narrative of the masque is provided by a writer whose function is to create a fictional context for the arrival of the antimasque. Often the formal narrative idealizes the court, emphasizing it as an instantiation of order and social harmony, with the antimasquers, in contrast, representing disorder and discord. The inevitable departure of the antimasque affirms the order embodied by the court.⁴⁶⁷

The significance of the masque structure, with its arrival and departure of threatening disorder, gains resonance from its historical and economic contexts. Jennifer Chibnall points out that by the end of the Elizabethan era the rapidly developing mercantilist and capitalistic economy was quickly eroding the rurally based feudal structure, which had become more of a lingering remnant than an economic reality. This social development turned the aristocracy and landed gentry to alternate means for economic survival, and, uncertain of its function, the court withdrew into itself. Within the enclosed world of the court, and in proportion to its growing sense of uncertainty, the entertainment became more involved in expressing an aristocratic sense of control, represented by displaying the threatening elements in such a way as could be managed or obliterated by the masque vision. In the Elizabethan and Jacobean masque the management of difference was expressed through tropes of reconciliation and political unity; but by Charles's reign the court had been diminished and threatened enough that management was represented as securing an enclosed space for the aristocracy.⁴⁶⁸

When considering the structure of the masque we see that it carries with it tropes of self-evidential truth and order, and juxtaposed disruptive otherness that requires management or expulsion. Returning back to Zapf's original questions, Poe's masque setting is not so much concerned with 'historical distancing' and 'aesthetic anachronism' as it is with bringing its tropes to bear on the American scene. Specifically, Poe aligns the self-evidential truths of the masque

⁴⁶⁷ David Lindley, 'Introduction', in *The Court Masque*, ed. by David Lindley, (Manchester: Manchester UP, 1984), pp. 1-15 (pp. 1-2).

⁴⁶⁸ Jennifer Chibnall, "'To That secure fix'd state': The Function of the Caroline Masque Form", in *The Court Masque*, pp. 78-93 (pp. 80-82).

with Emerson's absolute knowledge, and presents the setting itself as an allegory for Transcendental discourse. The 'mummer' who intrudes into this discourse is at once the antimasque and an instantiation of mortality. Its presence disrupts the Transcendental structure by undermining its assurances of an absolute knowledge beyond the realm of empiricism. As to how Poe conflates the masque setting with Transcendental discourse will be illustrated through discussion of key tropes in Emerson's 'Idealism' and 'The Over-soul' and their instantiations in 'The Masque'.

In his discussion of Poe and Emerson, Brian Harding notes that Emerson alludes to *The Tempest* in the 'Idealism' chapter of *Nature* in order to exemplify the poet's ability to subordinate material objects to his imagination. As Emerson says, 'the perception of real affinities between events (that is to say, of ideal affinities, for those only are real), enables the poet thus to make free with the most imposing forms and phenomena of the world, and to assert the predominance of the soul'; and Prospero, Emerson's archetypal poet, asserts 'the predominance of the soul' by controlling the physical world to transfigure it in accordance with his imaginative vision.⁴⁶⁹ In juxtaposition, the Prospero of 'The Masque of the Red Death' asserts his imaginative power over the physical world by creating a 'micro-kingdom' entirely dominated by his fancy: 'Everything in the confined world of the abbey is a product of Prospero's imagination, from the colours of the seven rooms, to the colour of the great clock'.⁴⁷⁰ Yet, for all Prospero's power, the Red Death invades the realm of his imaginative vision and destroys his 'kingdom'. 'The Masque' thereby allegorizes the intrusion of reality into the 'circumscribed world of the poet's imaginative control'; and as Harding asserts, this 'contrast between Poe's Prospero and Emerson's reveals more about their conceptions of art than any disagreement concerning the status of metre in poetry'.⁴⁷¹

By discussing 'Idealism' in greater detail, we see how Poe's Lockean based empiricism stands inimically to Emerson's conceptualization and collapse of creation and knowing. The dominant trope in 'Idealism' is the conflation of the outside world's material reality with the poet's / philosopher's inner world of imagination and Reason. At the outset of the chapter Emerson says, 'a noble doubt presents itself' as to 'whether nature outwardly exists', and he

⁴⁶⁹ Brian Harding, *American Literature in Context: II, 1830-1865*, American Literature in Context: 1620-1930 (London: Methuen, 1982), p. 67.

⁴⁷⁰ Harding, p. 68.

⁴⁷¹ Harding, p. 68.

ponders ‘in my utter impotence to test the authenticity of the report of my sense’ ‘what difference does it make whether Orion is up there in heaven, or some god paints the image in the firmament of my soul?’.⁴⁷² For Emerson, culture and our empirically based Understanding compel us to believe in an absolute nature; however, ‘when the eye of Reason opens’ then sensory experience becomes subordinate to the ‘causes and spirits’ which are seen to govern them. In part, the ability to experience reality through ‘the eye of Reason’ involves a dislocation of perspective. In the realm of the Understanding this dislocation may occur by mechanical means when a buggy or train provides a vantage point from outside of the usual. When this occurs the viewer becomes wholly detached from his usual relation with the world and perceives other beings as ‘apparent, not substantial’.⁴⁷³

Relative to poetry, the poet creates a dislocation of perspective in a ‘higher manner’ by making objects of the physical world become symbols for his Reason: ‘to [the poet], the refractory world is ductile and flexible; he invests dust and stones with humanity, and makes them the words of Reason’; he ‘unfixes the land from the sea, [and] makes them revolve around the axis of his primary thought’.⁴⁷⁴ Above all poets, ‘Shakespeare possesses the power of subordinating nature for the purposes of expression’, and Emerson lists examples from *The Tempest*, as noted above, to illustrate how he correlates the ‘farthest sundered things’ ‘by a subtile spiritual connexion’.⁴⁷⁵

Just as the Emersonian poet transfigures material objects through his passion, the philosopher ‘postpones the apparent order and relations of things to the empire of thought’. Emerson insists that philosophy ‘proceeds on the faith that a law determines all phenomena, which being known, the phenomena can be predicted’. This law, ‘when in the mind, is an idea’; and an idea in turn manifests a ‘spiritual life’ ‘imparted to nature’. When reason is able to seize philosophical laws the material world becomes subordinate to the idea – the ‘solid seeming block of matter’ becomes ‘pervaded and dissolved by a thought’ – and the ‘masses of nature’ are penetrated by an ‘informing soul’. With this conflation of soul and matter, nature becomes ‘transferred into the mind’ and leaves matter ‘like an outcast corpse’. Emerson calls Ideas ‘immortal necessary uncreated natures’, and when we are within their presence ‘we wait in an

⁴⁷² Ralph Waldo Emerson, *Nature*, in *The Collected Works of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, ed. by Robert E. Spiller and Alfred R. Ferguson, 7 vols (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard UP, 1971), I, 7-45, (p. 29).

⁴⁷³ Emerson, *Nature*, p. 31.

⁴⁷⁴ Emerson, *Nature*, p. 31.

⁴⁷⁵ Emerson, *Nature*, p. 32.

Olympus of the gods', 'we ascend into their region, and know that these are the thoughts of the Supreme Being'; and by attaining Ideas we attain an absolute knowledge: 'we learn the difference between the absolute and the conditional or relative. We apprehend the absolute. As it were, for the first time, *we exist*. We become immortal, for we learn that time and space are relations of matter'.⁴⁷⁶

In order to undermine Emerson's ideal of absolute knowledge, Poe allegorizes it in the setting of 'The Masque of the Red Death', writing the Renaissance masque, with its self-evidential truths, as an analogy for an Emersonian discourse that writes its own truth and grounds its epistemology in a supernal Reason. Just as the Renaissance masque communicates an established order, the court of Prince Prospero embodies an aristocratic sense of control, with threatening elements either contained or displayed in such a way as can be managed and controlled. Specifically, mortality, reified as the Red Death, is controlled in both a physical and intellectual sense as something incomprehensible and disruptive to the knowable order, as implied not only by the court's seclusion but the act of welding shut the abbey gates because the courtiers 'resolved to leave means neither of ingress or egress to the sudden impulses of despair or of frenzy from within'.⁴⁷⁷ In essence, Prospero establishes an 'empire of thought' in which everything that is not subordinate to his own expression is precluded; and the justification for establishing this 'empire' is suggested in the structure of the abbey itself, particularly through the seven lighted rooms.

Much criticism pertaining to 'The Masque' has focused on the meaning of the seven rooms: H.H. Bell notes that the masque's seven rooms are 'the allegorical representation of Prince Prospero's life span', but may also reflect the seven decades of life, which 'according to the Bible is the normal life span of man – three score and ten', while Vanderbilt expands on Bell's interpretation by suggesting that the different colours correspond to different stages of life: blue represents dawning life, green connotes youth and growth, orange is the 'high noon of existence', etc.⁴⁷⁸ Another interpretation can be gained by considering Coleridge's *Table Talk*, which Poe references in *Marginalia*. In his April 24, 1832 commentary on 'Colours' Coleridge states, 'colours may be expressed by a heptad, the largest possible formula for things infinite, as

⁴⁷⁶ Emerson, *Nature*, p. 33-35.

⁴⁷⁷ Poe, 'The Masque', p. 269.

⁴⁷⁸ H.H. Bell, "'The Masque of the Red Death': An Interpretation", *South Atlantic Bulletin*, 38. 4 (1973), pp. 101-105 (pp. 101-102), Vanderbilt, p. 381.

the pentad is the smallest possible form. Indeed, the heptad of things infinite is in all cases reducible to the pentad'.⁴⁷⁹ He then lists a heptad of colours, including blue, violet, orange, red, yellow, 'green indecomponible', and 'green decomponible' which approximately correspond with 'The Masque's' coloured rooms of blue, violet, orange, green, purple, white, and black with window panes 'a deep red colour'.⁴⁸⁰ Similar to Emerson's 'Idealism', Coleridge's 'Colours' pantheistically limns a structure inclusive of absolute knowledge beyond empirical methodology – an inclusiveness enforced by his suggestion that the 'tetrad' of his structure 'is the formula of God' 'and is, in reality, the same with, the Trinity'.⁴⁸¹

In 'The Over-soul' Emerson draws a distinction between philosophers such as Spinoza, Kant and Coleridge, and others such as Locke, Paley, and Stewart, naming the former, teachers who 'speak *from within*, or from experience, as parties and possessors of the fact; and the other class, *from without*, as spectators merely, or perhaps as acquainted of the fact on the evidence of third persons'.⁴⁸² This dichotomy between speaking from within or without is appurtenant to Emerson's larger discussion about revelatory visions and their relation to the soul. Emerson describes his concept of the Over-soul as the Unity 'within which every man's particular being is contained and made one with all other'. Although physically we live in 'division, in parts', 'within man is the soul of the whole', or the Over-soul.⁴⁸³ Revelations are the 'disclosure' of the soul to ourselves, and Emerson defends their authenticity when he states, 'the soul is the perceiver and revealer of truth. We know truth when we see it, let sceptic and scoffer say what they choose [. . .] We know truth when we see it, from opinion, as we know when we are awake that we are awake'.⁴⁸⁴ Evan Carton points out, though, the Emersonian revelation that one claims to witness must be a reality generated from without; yet when this revelation is to be communicated to others its authority and authenticity require it be spoken from within, from experience. This necessary fluctuation of the revelatory vision between exterior and interior raises disturbing questions: 'if the sacred teacher – the prophet, the poet – speaks from within as a possessor of the fact, does not this suggest that his "attitude of reception" during his visions

⁴⁷⁹ S. T. Coleridge, p. 177.

⁴⁸⁰ S. T. Coleridge, p. 177, Poe, 'The Masque', p. 270.

⁴⁸¹ S. T. Coleridge, p. 177.

⁴⁸² Ralph Waldo Emerson, 'The Over-soul', in *The Essays of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, (London: Grant Richards, 1903), VI, pp. 152-170 (p. 164).

⁴⁸³ Emerson, 'The Over-soul', p. 153.

⁴⁸⁴ Emerson, 'The Over-soul', p. 160.

may be an attitude, a posture, assumed to disguise from himself his own manufacture of these visions' ?⁴⁸⁵

Emerson projects this doubt onto the teachers who speak from without, calling them 'half-insane' for their 'fervent' mysticism, 'prophesying', and 'infinite' of thought.⁴⁸⁶ Poe, however, turns this insanity back onto Transcendentalism when he says of Prospero, 'there are some who would have thought him mad. His followers felt that he was not. It was necessary to see and hear and touch him to be *sure* that he was not'.⁴⁸⁷ Prospero attempts to implement a structure inclusive of an 'infinite of thought'; and in attempting to attain this self-created absolute knowledge he also attempts to ascend over time and matter and 'become immortal', as emphasized in his effort to literally shut out mortality. His attempts at immortality are undermined, though, by the limitations of empiricism, suggested by the necessity 'to see and hear and touch him to be sure' he is not 'half-insane'.

Referring back to the structure of the mask, we see how the seven rooms allegorize a discourse that grounds itself in absolute knowledge: first, the structure of the apartments suggests an empirical, sequential progression of measured knowledge: 'the apartments were so irregularly disposed that the vision embraced but little more than one at a time. There was a sharp turn at every twenty or thirty yards, and at each turn a novel effect'.⁴⁸⁸ This empirical realm is in turn surrounded by another space, 'a closed corridor which pursue[s] the windings of the suite', that is not readily accessible but can be known via 'stained glass windows' and 'projected' rays.⁴⁸⁹ In other words, the apartments are structured conterminously with Emerson's philosophy, with an empirical realm of Understanding, and a realm 'beyond' suggestive of Reason and the Over-soul. This correlation of the 'closed corridor' with spirituality is further implied by its braziers of fire resting on 'tripods' that recall the tetrad, or Trinity, as well as the projected light that 'produce[s]' 'gaudy and fantastic appearances'.⁴⁹⁰ Throughout 'The Masque' the courtiers are depicted in chimerical terms, as 'fantastic appearances', 'dreams', 'a multitude of dreams', 'phantasms', 'delirious fancies', and twice they are drawn as 'taking hue from' 'the rooms' and

⁴⁸⁵ Evan Carton, *The Rhetoric of American Romance: Dialectic and Identity in Emerson, Dickinson, Poe, and Hawthorne*, (London: The Johns Hopkins UP, 1985), p. 33.

⁴⁸⁶ Emerson, 'The Over-soul', p. 164.

⁴⁸⁷ Poe, 'The Masque', p. 271.

⁴⁸⁸ Poe, 'The Masque', p. 269.

⁴⁸⁹ Poe, 'The Masque', p. 270.

⁴⁹⁰ Poe, 'The Masque', p. 270.

‘many-tainted windows’.⁴⁹¹ As mere ‘productions’ of the light, the courtiers’ interiorities are, in effect, subsumed by a Transcendental vision reified by the apartments, their souls replaced by a material, artistic representation of the soul. In this regard, the light from the ‘closed corridor’ ironically recalls Emerson’s definition of the Over-soul as a light ‘from within or from behind’ that ‘shines through us upon things, and makes us aware that we are nothing, but the light is all’.⁴⁹² Reduced to mere ephemera, the courtiers ironically literalize this description: they are nothing, their essentiality subsumed by the light.

Connected to Poe’s criticism of Emerson’s pantheistic discourse is the theme of sympathy. Specifically, Poe presents Emerson’s ideas as preclusive of a true union with God through the Holy Spirit, with the dissolution of the maskers being a sign of their biblical punishment. The most prominent signifier of this Providential punishment is the image of the clock. In his description of sublime sounds that can ‘overpower the soul’, suspend its action’, and ‘fill it with terror’, Burke lists excessive ‘loudness’, and ‘the noise of vast cataracts, raging storms, thunder, or artillery’. He also notes that few ‘things are more awful [sic] than the striking of a great clock, when the silence of the night prevents the attention from being too much dissipated’.⁴⁹³ Again, the Burkean sublime is associated with terror, but this terror can also be due to a confrontation with God. As Burke explains this confrontation, ‘whilst we contemplate so vast an object, under the arm, as it were, of almighty power, and invested upon every side with omnipresence, we shrink into the minuteness of our own nature, and are, in a manner, annihilated before him’.⁴⁹⁴ As a representation of sublimity, the ebony clock remains somewhat ‘beyond the bounds’ of the Prince’s artistic control; and this same characteristic can be attributed to the mummer who brings the Red Death, who emerges out of the ruminations that the clock induces, as stated: ‘And thus too, it happened, perhaps, that before the last echoes of the last chime had utterly sunk into silence, there were many individuals in the crowd who had found leisure to become aware of the presence of a masked figure which had arrested the attention of no single individual before’.⁴⁹⁵

This theme of Biblical punishment is suggested in the symptoms of the disease itself: ‘Blood was its Avatar and its seal – the redness and the horror of blood. There were sharp pains,

⁴⁹¹ Poe, ‘The Masque’, pp. 270-272.

⁴⁹² Emerson, ‘The Over-soul’, p. 154.

⁴⁹³ Burke, pp. 82-83.

⁴⁹⁴ Burke, p. 68.

⁴⁹⁵ Poe, ‘The Masque’, pp. 271-272.

and sudden dizziness, and the profuse bleeding at the pores, with dissolution. The scarlet stains upon the body and especially upon the face of the victim, were the pest ban which shut him out from the aid and from the sympathy of his fellow man'.⁴⁹⁶ The symptom of blood easily recalls Christ-related themes, which are emphasized again in the description of the Red Death arriving like 'a thief in the night', which is a phrase used by St. Paul to describe Christ in Thessalonians:

But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you.
For your selves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the
night
For when they shall say, Peace and safety; [sic] then sudden destruction cometh
upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shal [sic] not escape.
But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day shall overtake you as a thief.
Ye are all the children of light, and the children of day: we are not of the night,
nor of darkness.
Therefore let us not sleep as do others; but let us watch, and be sober.
For they that sleep, sleep in the night; and they that be drunken, are drunken in the
night.
But let us who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breast-plate of faith and
love, and for an helmet, the hope of salvation.
For God hath not appointed us to wrath; but to obtain salvation by Our Lord Jesus
Christ,
Who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with
him.⁴⁹⁷

St. Paul's passage warns against moral certainty and draws a distinction between the Christian 'brethren' and the people of 'darkness' or 'night' – metaphorically those who do not find salvation in Christ – who believe themselves to live in 'Peace and safety' but will be punished on

⁴⁹⁶ Poe, 'The Masque', p. 269.

⁴⁹⁷ Poe, 'The Masque', p. 273, Thessalonians 5. 1-10, in *The Holy Bible containing the Old and New Testament. Newly Translated out of the Original Tongues: and with the former Translations diligently Compared and Revised. By His Majesties Special Command. Appointed to be Read in Churches*, (Edinburgh: the Heirs and Successors of Andrew Anderson, 1705)
<http://galenet.galegroup.com/servlet/ECCO> [accessed 3 January 2009]

the day of reckoning. A similar warning, and description of Christ, is given by St. Paul in II Peter 3. 10-12: 'But the day of the lord will come as a thief in the night; in which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burnt up'.⁴⁹⁸

Direct analogies may be drawn between the Thessalonians and II Peter passages and 'The Masque of the Red Death'. Just as the people of the 'night' believe themselves to live in 'Peace and safety', the court of Prince Prospero finds 'security' within the castellated abbey; and just as the 'day of the Lord' comes to the people of 'darkness' as a 'thief in the night', so too does the Red Death come to the revellers. Bringing Poe's Biblical references to light not only calls into relief the Neoplatonism under-riding many of Poe's tale, but associates the bodily dissolution and decay of the revellers with the precluded Holy Spirit, especially when considering the unredeemed body as described by Byles in Chapter Two. The Scriptural passages also bring to 'The Masque' a trope of undermined moral certainty which, when contextualized ideologically with Poe's debate against Transcendentalism, lends itself to the debate against epistemological certainty as well.

These Biblical references also foreground a more conservative theological view against Emersonian spirituality, particularly one that emphasizes a Christian salvation and charitable sympathy. The theme of sympathy is also present in 'The Masque' through its allusion to *The Tempest*, a play in which sympathy is the foundation of its meaning.⁴⁹⁹ Michael Neill notes that central to *The Tempest* is the figure upon which the notion of sympathy and redemption is founded, the Communion service – a service which in its Anglican form has a triple function: it is a memorial ceremony of Christ's sacrifice; it is a ritual of repentance in which remembrance of sins leads to forgiveness; and finally, it celebrates, re-affirms, and re-integrates the Christian community. Such Eucharistic tropes are clear in Prospero's final request to the community of the audience to be 'relieved by prayer' 'which frees all faults', and his reminder, 'as you from crimes would pardoned be, | Let your indulgence set me free'.⁵⁰⁰ They are also evinced in Ariel's feast, which is abruptly taken away from the three 'men of sin', Alonso, Sebastian and Antonio, before they are reminded of their misdeeds, thereby recalling the *Book of Common*

⁴⁹⁸ II Peter 3. 10, in *The Holy Bible containing the Old and New Testament*.

⁴⁹⁹ Poe, 'The Masque', p. 269, Michael Neill, 'Remembrance and Revenge: Hamlet, Macbeth and The Tempest', in *Jonson and Shakespeare*, ed. by Ian Donaldson, (London: The MacMillan Press, Ltd., 1983), pp. 35-56 (p. 49).

⁵⁰⁰ Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, Epilogue. 16-20.

Prayer's prohibition of evil-doers from the Eucharist prior to their repentance: 'If among those who come to be partakers of the Holy Communion, the Minister shall know any to be an open and notorious evil liver, or to have done any wrong to his neighbours' then the Minister warns him to 'presume not to come to the Lord's Table', until he has 'repented and amended his former evil life'.⁵⁰¹

The theme of exemption from the Christian community through sin is evinced in 'The Masque' when Prince Prospero and his court forego sympathy towards their fellow men. In doing so, they also forego salvation and suffer the fate of dissolution. In the 'Annihilation' excerpt of *Marginalia* Poe links morality to dissolution when he puts forth 'a very poetical and very suggestive, although, perhaps no very tenable philosophy, by supposing that the virtuous live while the wicked suffer annihilation hereafter'. The possibility of annihilation 'would be in the ratio of the sin', and determined by the 'proportion of dreamlessness' in a sleep or swoon. Dreamless sleeps or utter unconsciousness 'demonstrate the soul to have been then in such a condition that, had death occurred, annihilation would have followed'. On the other hand, when revival is accompanied by a recollection of visions then 'the bliss or wretchedness of the existence' in the hereafter is 'indicated by the character of the visions'.⁵⁰² The moral causation outlined in 'Annihilation' brings into relief a similar causation in 'The Masque'; specifically, that the courtiers – the 'multitude of dreams' – are annihilated because they lack the Spiritual element, and thereby commit the sin of denying sympathy. This morality underpinning the courtiers' punishment is further emphasized when considering the *American Book of Common Prayer*'s definition of those who receive Communion as 'partakers of the kingdom of Heaven' – a definition coincident with I Corinthians 15: 48-50, as listed above, that those who do not find salvation in Christ 'cannot share in God's Kingdom'.⁵⁰³ Within Poe's philosophy of identity, the courtiers are 'earthbound' in both senses: they renege on their agency for expression and they lack the soul's elevation through the Holy Spirit.

While the morality implied in 'The Masque' may be read towards a general didactic purpose, textual evidence ties it to questions about sympathy in relation to Native Americans,

⁵⁰¹ Neill, p. 47, and 'The Order For The Administration of the Lord's Supper, or Holy Communion', in *The Book of Common Prayer, and Administration of the Sacraments and Other Rites and Ceremonies of the Church, According to the Pentecostal Episcopal Church in the United States of America: Together With the Psalter, or Psalms of David*, (New York: T. Allen, 1797) p. 1 of 16.

⁵⁰² Poe, *Marginalia*, p. 354-355.

⁵⁰³ *Book of Common Prayer*, 'Holy Communion', p. 6 of 16.

and, more implicitly, to a sense of colonial guilt: the allusions to *The Tempest*, with its New World setting; the use of the name Prospero; the Red Death as Caliban's manifested curse; and Caliban's centrality to Poe's concept of Native Americans all point to a colonial context. More obliquely, this context is further brought into relief when considering the Emersonian implications in the 'Beauty' that marks Prospero's court. While the narrator's description of the court as containing Beauty connects 'The Masque' with Poe's Neoplatonic theories, it also gestures toward tropes in the 'Beauty' chapter of *Nature* in which Emerson – despite rejecting Unitarianism – promotes a Lockean ideology. Specifically, he outlines how the combination of human will with nature engenders an entitlement to property: 'we are taught by great actions that the universe is the property of every individual in it. Every rational creature has all nature for his dowry and estate. It is his if he will'. This romantic sense of entitlement is directly applied to America when Emerson limns Columbus as a man who 'takes up the world into himself' in accordance with his 'constitution': 'When the bark of Columbus nears the shores of America; – before it, the beach lined with savages, fleeing out of all their huts of cane; the sea behind; and the purple mountains of the Indian Archipelago around, can we separate the man from the living picture?'.⁵⁰⁴ Paul Giles notes that 'romantic racialists' such as Emerson ascribe characteristics to particular races, and in 'Beauty' this ascription is implied in the condition that allows one to claim nature as a dowry; in particular, like Poe, Emerson denies rationality to Native American populations in order to justify Anglo-American appropriation of the continent.⁵⁰⁵ Despite its romantic presumptions, 'Beauty' is thereby ideologically slanted to promote America's justified appropriation of tribal lands for the purpose of establishing property. The fact that Poe is engaged with social phenomena of his particular historical moment, and that he mobilizes his tales and their allusions towards particular ideological ends immediately invalidates any argument that Poe is an 'irresponsible referencer', utilizing allusion for mere ornamentation. Instead, as 'The Masque' indicates, through his references Poe constructs an opacity that traduces an absolute certainty and in doing so draws attention to itself as a text figured by and embedded in debates about morality, sympathy, and epistemology. This is not to assume that Poe's conceptualization of Native Americans is not racially biased – it obviously is, and in its own way justifies American appropriation of the continent; but to dismiss his tales as lacking

⁵⁰⁴ Emerson, *Nature*, p. 15.

⁵⁰⁵ Paul Giles, *Atlantic Republic: The American Tradition in English Literature* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2006), p. 45, Nelson, pp. 81-83.

‘moral depth’ is also to do them a disservice. Analyzing his tales in relation to their ideological and epistemological contexts allows for a nuanced reading that sheds light on Poe’s idiosyncratic meanings.

Chapter Five: Essentiality and Prosthetic Masculinity in Poe's 'The Man That Was Used Up'

Introduction

Like Colonel Johnson and Ransom Clarke, Brevet Brigadier General John A.B.C. Smith is an Indian fighter whose 'shattered frame' reveals a subjective instability related to the American struggle for land. As the nameless narrator of 'The Man That Was Used Up' progresses in his knowledge quest to uncover the mystery of John A.B.C. Smith, his encounters with the gossipers of American high society are marked by allusions to European Renaissance and Romantic texts that bring into relief the colonial and identificatory concerns of early national America. By connecting American subjectivities with European discourse, and underscoring the concatenations between a national ideology and the over-arching epistemologies that sustain it, Poe locates the genesis of American tropes within a more transatlantic context, and in this sense practices the 'universality of mind' recommended by Schlegel for the 'true critic or connoisseur', eschewing the early America's project of literary nation building. As J. Gerald Kennedy points out, early America was involved in an 'invention of tradition' between 1820 and 1850, constructing a distinct national identity through the production of books and magazines that extolled American history and themes: 'early settlement, the border wars with native tribes, the Revolution, and the exploration of the West, as well as the official, public enshrinement of the Pilgrims and Plymouth Rock' were often commemorated in order to establish a strong sense of national self. Although faced with the 'cultural pressure to construct a national narrative', Poe disregarded such topics and 'mocked the fetishizing of American subjects'.⁵⁰⁶ One such fetishized subject Poe 'de-mythologizes' in 'The Man That Was Used Up' is that of the 'shattered' Indian-fighter. This is not to argue that bodies dismembered by colonial warfare are exceptionally American; but rather, that this trope becomes caught up in certain American context where it was displayed and extolled for political purposes, especially in relation to Indian Removal. At the same time, though, by using a universal approach Poe is not necessarily

⁵⁰⁶ J. Gerald Kennedy, "'A Mania for Composition': Poe's Annus Mirabilis and the Violence of Nation-Building", *American Literary History*, 17 (2005), 1-35 (pp. 6-7).

undermining the American context of male dismemberment caused by Indian warfare; as David S. Reynolds points out, early American writers ‘now recognized as “major” had, of course, a profound debt to classical literature; but the key factor to understand is that, unlike some of their contemporaries, they transformed classic themes and devices into truly American texts by fusing them with native literary materials’.⁵⁰⁷ Like Herman Melville’s novel, *Moby-Dick*, which ‘democratically encompasses a uniquely large number of antebellum textual strategies’ as well as classical and Shakespearian tropes, ‘The Man That Was Used Up’ grafts classical European with American depictions of identity and corporeal dismemberment. Specifically, Poe limns the injured body as a paradoxical condition of being both a man and not a man, as opposed to a celebratory symbol for America’s predestined ownership of its territory, by tying a trope related to Indian warfare with European and English fictions – such as Shakespeare’s *Othello*, Byron’s *Manfred*, Defoe’s *Robinson Crusoe* – that depict the dismembered body as a frontier of epistemological limitation. In doing so, he positions the disarticulate corpus of the Indian-fighter as a site where ideological narratives, and methods of knowing, lose coherence. Combined with themes of epistemological limitation are the Neoplatonic tropes outlined in previous chapters that draw Smith’s disarticulate body as one that is lacking a Spiritual essence or elevated soul, as suggested by the dearth of sympathy shown to the ‘Kickapoos’ and by the disconnection between the female and male characters of ‘The Man That Was Used Up’; and this lack of an elevated soul also means an inability to claim the national territory by investing the land with the ‘poetic sentiment’ through labour.

‘The Man That Was Used Up’

An illuminating point of entry for discussing identity construction in ‘The Man That Was Used Up’ can be gained by studying Poe’s allusion to *Othello* in his inclusion of Iago’s statement, ‘—mandragora | Nor all the drowsy syrups of the world / Shall ever medicine thee to that sweet sleep | Which thou ow’dst yesterday!’.⁵⁰⁸ Poe’s reasons for referencing *Othello* can be understood by again turning to Schlegel’s *Lectures*, particularly his discussion of *Othello*. For

⁵⁰⁷ David S. Reynolds, *Beneath the American Renaissance: The Subversive Imagination in the Age of Emerson and Melville*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard UP, 1988), p. 5.

⁵⁰⁸ Poe, ‘The Man’, p. 409, Thomas Ollive Mabbott, Notes for ‘The Man That Was Used Up’, in *Collected Works of Edgar Allan Poe*, ed. by Thomas Ollive Mabbott, 3 vols (London: Belknap Press, 1978), II, 389-392 (p. 390).

Schlegel, Othello is divided between ‘savagery’ and morality, and thereby ‘suffers as a double man; at once in the higher and lower sphere into which his being was divided’.⁵⁰⁹ This division implies an imperial ideology that argues for the ‘inherent’ inability of the ‘savage’ races to attain morality or proper rationality. As Schlegel notes, ‘We recognize in Othello the wild nature of that glowing zone which generates the most raging beasts of prey and the most deadly poisons, tamed only in appearance by the desire of fame, by foreign laws of honour, and by nobler and milder manners’.⁵¹⁰ In other words, Othello only has the ‘appearance’ of morality and rationality due to the influence of European Imperialism; and this mere appearance of civilized identity relates back to his inability to raise up his soul through Beauty and the Holy Spirit, as implied when Schlegel states that Othello’s jealousy ‘is not the jealousy of the heart, which is compatible with the tenderest feeling and adoration of the beloved object; it is of that sensual kind which, in burning climes, has given birth to the disgraceful confinement of women and many other unnatural usages’.⁵¹¹ Not only is Othello unable to reach a closer union with God through the Spirit, as implied by his origins in a ‘savage’ society that confines women, but his identity is ‘unnatural’, artificial, because it lacks the Spiritual ‘root’; as Schlegel states, ‘The Moor seems noble, frank, confiding, grateful for the love shown him; and he is all this’; however, ‘the mere physical force of passion puts in flight in one moment all his acquired and accustomed virtues, and gives the upper hand to the savage in him over the moral man’.⁵¹²

Poe relates Othello’s artificial, and ‘unnatural’, identity back to the construction of American manhood, which he sees as a constituted without an essential Spiritual grounding. As outlined in previous chapters, Poe endorses America’s claim to the land so far as it is invested with labour as defined by Locke, especially privileging labour inspired by the ‘poetic sentiment’, because it facilitates the nation’s Spiritual ‘root’ and returns the land back to its Edenic condition. Attainment of the national territory without the invested element of divinity creates a nation, and national subjects, that are themselves artificial, and the narrator of ‘The Man That Was Used Up’ finds this site of ‘unnaturalness’ at the end of his knowledge quest in the figure of General Smith. In drawing the Indian-fighter as an artificial construct Poe implies that the process of attaining rights to the land through military force is negligible, because it does not

⁵⁰⁹ Schlegel, II, 189.

⁵¹⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹¹ *Ibid.*

⁵¹² Schlegel, II, 189-190.

facilitate national Ideality. This is not to argue that Poe endorses Native American rights to the land. As stated, Poe perceives Native American ‘inherent’ irrationality as a disqualification from making a justified claim to the land, at least so far as that claim is based on essentiality. However, the fact that Poe perceives the military confiscation of Native American lands as ‘unnatural’ ties into his own theologically-grounded philosophies that correlate Ideality, including national Ideality, to the Christian idea of the Holy Spirit. In keeping with his idea that America has foregone its Spiritual ‘root’, Poe also feels that the nation has foregone the virtues associated with the Spirit, such as love, charity and a union with God, and the earthly, ‘deathly’ bodies are a sign of this essential lack. In this regard, the body of General Smith is disarticulate, and foregoes divine essence, for two reasons: it has an unjustified claim to the national territories, and it is missing the essential and cohering Spiritual interiority that Poe associates with the Holy Spirit and an elevated soul.

Recalling Poe’s figuration of women as agents of soteriological completion for their male counterparts, Poe implies a Spiritual lack in American society by depicting a disconnection between the male and female characters: the narrator cannot communicate with Miss Tabitha T.; Kathleen O’Trump berates Mr. Tattles; Mrs. Pirouette criticizes the narrator while dancing; and the narrator thinks he is dialoguing with Miranda Cognoscenti about Smith when in fact she refers to Climax.⁵¹³ This soteriological theme gains resonance when reading Misses Arabella Cognoscenti’s name as an allusion to John Winthrop’s sermon, ‘A Model of Christian Charity’, which was delivered on board the *Arbella* while on route to America.⁵¹⁴ In ‘A Model for Christian Charity’, Winthrop outlines a model for community bound by economic as well as sympathetic agency which is also organized around ideas related to the Holy Spirit and corporeal imagery. Positing Scripture-based rules for lending and collecting debts, Winthrop also justifies charity and mercy, noting that ‘every seventh year the creditor was to quit that which he lent to his brother if he were poor as appears’. Grounding ‘the practice of mercy according to the rule of God’s law’ is an ‘affection from which this exercise of mercy must arise’, or the fulfillment of the law through love.⁵¹⁵ Quoting the Bible to define Christian love as the ‘bond of perfection’, Winthrop uses corporeal tropes to illustrate love as the binding ‘ligament’ of community,

⁵¹³ Poe, ‘The Man’, pp. 408-412.

⁵¹⁴ Poe, ‘The Man’, p. 408, ‘John Winthrop’, in *The Norton Anthology of American Literature*, ed. by Nina Baym, Wayne Franklin, et. al. (London: WW Norton & Company, 1994), pp. 169-170 (p. 170).

⁵¹⁵ John Winthrop, ‘A Model of Christian Charity’, in *The Norton Anthology of American Literature*, ed. by Nina Baym, Wayne Franklin, et. al. (London: WW Norton & Company, 1994), 170-180 (pp. 174-175).

referring first to the Body of Christ and His church: ‘when Christ comes and by His spirit and love knits all these parts to Himself and each to other, it is become the most perfect and best proportioned body in the world’. The transforming and binding properties of Christ’s love also apply to the formation of individuals: every man is born with the principle of Adam, to ‘love and seek himself only’ until Christ takes possession of the soul and infuses the principle of ‘love to God and our brother’. When this occurs, the quality of love ‘works like the spirit on the dry bones. Ezekiel 37: “bone came to bone.” It gathers together the scattered bones [. . .] and knits them again into one body again in Christ, whereby a man is become again a living soul’. Finally, noting that the ‘ground of love is an apprehension of some resemblance in things loved to that which affects it’, Winthrop describes the binding qualities of love in personal inter-relationships with imagery connotative of marital undertones: when the soul ‘finds anything like to itself, it is like Adam when Eve was brought to him. She must have it one with herself. This is flesh of my flesh (saith the soul) and bone of my bone [. . . . She] desires nearness and familiarity with it’.⁵¹⁶

In *Captivity and Sentiment: Cultural Exchange in American Literature, 1682-1861*, Michelle Burnham employs Winthrop’s tropes of debt and corporeality in her interpretation of Catharine Maria Sedgwick’s *Hope Leslie*, claiming that Magawisca’s unveiling of her missing limb confronts American readers with an ‘unobscured vision of cultural debt, of an unrepayable Indian dispossession’ as opposed to an ‘obscured scene of cultural loss’, and ‘the inevitability of Indian disappearance’. Elaborating on debt and dispossession in the Jacksonian context, Burnham describes Andrew Jackson’s legal career as built on a ‘complete dismissal of John Winthrop’s rule of mercy, on the refusal to convert debt to loss’. As a lawyer, Jackson represented creditors in their suits against debtors, and his own experience of paying off debts over several years left him with a life-long hatred for debt evaders. In fact, ‘only Jackson’s obsession with debt equalled his obsession with Indian removal’. Of course, debt and Indian removal were correlated because ‘Indian lands were repeatedly possessed in exchange for tribal debt’; and the market laws that justified Indian possession were characterized by a ‘passive inevitability’ that eliminated Anglo-American agency and ‘erased the guilt of accountability’.⁵¹⁷

While the question of colonial guilt and accountability are not immediately perceptible in ‘The Man That Was Used Up’ these concerns are raised indirectly by way of reference. The

⁵¹⁶ Winthrop, pp. 174-177.

⁵¹⁷ Michelle Burnham, *Captivity and Sentiment: Cultural Exchange in American Literature, 1682-1861*, (London: New England UP, 1999), p. 116.

narrator's conversation with Miss Bas-Bleu alludes to both Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* and Byron's *Manfred* when they debate whether the 'title of a certain poetical drama of Lord Byron's' is 'Man-Fred or 'Man-Friday'.⁵¹⁸ In *Robinson Crusoe*, the protagonist wavers about dispatching the cannibals, stating, 'I had greatly scrupled the lawfulness of it to me, and my heart trembled at the thought of shedding so much blood, though it was my deliverance'.⁵¹⁹ Vis-à-vis Byron's drama, Ernest Hartley Coleridge explains, 'the *motif* of *Manfred* is remorse – eternal suffering for an inexpressible crime'.⁵²⁰ When contextualized by New World colonialism, such depictions of guilt readily find an association in America's troublesome relationship with its own land. Bergland notes that while the history of Anglo and Native American contact is marred by 'murders, looted graves, illegal land transfers, and disruptions of sovereignty', 'land ownership may be the source of the nation's deepest guilt'; and this sense of guilt related to America's access to property is evinced in the construction of *The Declaration of Independence*. Here, Jefferson alters Locke's fundamental rights to 'life, liberty, and property' by replacing the concept of property with 'the pursuit of happiness'. This act of elision, an effective denial and repression of the importance of property to the republic, as well as an ironic indicator of its centrality, evinces directly the 'vexed relationship the United States has to its own territory'.⁵²¹ Specifically, America's ownership of its own territory is 'vexed' because it is predicated on an 'inexpressible crime': the theft of Indian lands.

Although Poe employs Winthrop's 'A Model of Christian Charity' to indirectly allude to colonial guilt he also makes reference to it as an ironic foil to Jacksonian society. While Winthrop conceives of a 'city upon a hill' bound by Christian love, Poe draws an America characterized by lack of affection and maliciousness: the narrator assaults Climax, swears at Sinivate, kicks Smith, and thinks Captain Mann 'should have been both shot and hung'; and Smith barks racial epithets at Pompey.⁵²² This pettiness is compounded by inter-personal disconnection: Smith mistakenly calls the narrator Thompson, Mrs. Pirouette criticizes the narrator while dancing, and the narrator thinks he is dialoguing with Miranda Cognoscenti about

⁵¹⁸ Poe, 'The Man', p. 410.

⁵¹⁹ Daniel Defoe, *The Life and Adventures of Robinson Crusoe*, 2 vols (London: J. C. Nimmo and Bain, 1882), p. 257.

⁵²⁰ Ernest Hartley Coleridge, Introduction to *Manfred*, in *Poetical Works of Lord Byron*, ed. by Ernest Hartley Coleridge, 7 vols (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1901), IV, 79-83 (p. 82).

⁵²¹ Bergland, pp. 8-9.

⁵²² Poe, 'The Man', pp. 409-412.

Smith when in fact she refers to Climax.⁵²³ In short, Poe's high society lacks the cohesion grounded in affection endorsed by Winthrop, and is composed metaphorically of 'scattered bones', or people who are not 'living souls'. In effect, it is what Winthrop warns against when he discusses the 'city upon a hill'. In 'The Fashionable Thirties: Poe's Satire in "The Man That Was Used Up"', Ronald T. Curran corroborates the idea of a fractious community, noting that O'Trump and Pirouette are moves and steps rather than people, and that the society 'tends to split into numerous parts. Whether at the theater, the card party, or the dancing rout, the people play mechanical parts in the social mechanism'. Curran also claims that in Poe's 'unmanly society' 'women are the custodians of the social graces [and] men are their willing pupils' as they attempt social mobility.⁵²⁴ However, considering 'The Man That Was Used Up' alongside Winthrop's essay foregrounds a more profound lack of relationship between Poe's men and women. Specifically, the disjuncture between the sexes prohibits the soul from finding 'anything like', or 'flesh of [her] flesh' to be 'one with herself', thereby precluding the possibility of finding Spiritual completion. By alluding to themes of Christian charity and the conversion of debt into loss, Poe alludes to colonial guilt and thereby points up America's uncertain justification to land ownership and its corollary effect of destabilized identity.

Referring back to Schlegel's interpretation of Othello as a man divided into the 'higher' and 'lower' spheres brings into relief another identity-related concern regarding Anglo-America's displacement of its Native American tribes, as well as its relationship with its African-American populations. Specifically, Schlegel implies an identificatory collapse between Othello and Iago, stating that Iago 'pursues Othello like his evil spirit', so that 'it is if by means of an unfortunate affinity, founded however in nature, [his] influence was by necessity more powerful over him than the voice of his good angel Desdemona'. The implication in this statement is that Iago takes the place of Othello's spiritual mirror, and thus as an aspect of Othello himself.⁵²⁵ The collapse of identities between Iago and Othello has been noted by much contemporary scholarship: E.A.J. Honigmann asserts that despite their oppositionality, Elizabethan audiences would have found Othello and Iago alike in accordance with the psychology of humours, in

⁵²³ Poe, 'The Man', pp. 407-410.

⁵²⁴ Ronald T. Curran, 'The Fashionable Thirties: Poe's Satire in "The Man That Was Used Up"', *Markham Review*, 8 (1978), pp. 14-20, (pp. 16, 19).

⁵²⁵ Schlegel, II, p. 190.

which jealousy and envy are closely associated.⁵²⁶ In addition, they ‘both are professional soldiers who take their wives abroad on active service, feel betrayed by them, kill them, and thus in effect destroy themselves’.⁵²⁷ Alice Walker and John Dover Wilson note Othello’s and Iago’s inter-changeability of language, stating, ‘it is now a commonplace criticism that in his spiritual downfall Othello speaks like Iago’: Othello’s allusions to foul toads and summer flies ‘belong to the period of his overthrow’, reflecting Iago’s ‘ascendancy over Othello’s soul, so that he begins to think in Iago’s images, to see the world with Iago’s eyes’.⁵²⁸ Inversely, ‘Iago is so fired with his success that he borrows for a moment the highly metaphorical language of Othello’.⁵²⁹ Aligned with these tropes is Iago’s blurred delineation between self and other: ‘Were I the Moor, I would not be Iago; | In following him, I follow myself’, the repetitive, echoing dialogue between himself and Othello, and the undercurrents of sexual displacement manifested in Iago’s suspicions that Othello leapt into his ‘seat’ and did his ‘office’ ‘twixt [his] sheets’.⁵³⁰ While Othello’s and Iago’s antagonism is part of the ‘black/ white opposition’ ‘built into the play at every level’, when read in the context of ‘The Man That Was Used Up’ it corroborates a lack of delimitation between colonizer and colonized.⁵³¹

This duality of the self in connection to themes regarding race is further alluded to in ‘The Man That Was Used Up’ by Poe’s reference to Pierre Corneille’s *Le Cid*.⁵³² While the connection between *Le Cid* and Jacksonian American is faint, parallels of racial antagonism between the Castilians and Moors and Anglo and Native Americans may be drawn because both pairings are struggling over usurped territory. In *Le Cid*, King Fernando says about the Moors: ‘They cannot but with Jealouzy look on, | Seeing me rule in Andalouzia, | And this fair country, which I took from them, | Keepes their designs awake’.⁵³³ Waged over this disputed land is a battle of identities between the self and self. The opening epigram of ‘The Man That Was Used Up’ is spoken in Corneille’s drama by Cimera when she laments her father’s death at the hands

⁵²⁶ E.A.J Honigman, ‘Introduction’, in William Shakespeare, *Othello*, ed. by E.A.J. Honigman (Surrey: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1997) pp. 1-102 (p. 33).

⁵²⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵²⁸ Alice Walker & John Dover Wilson, ‘Introduction’, in William Shakespeare, *Othello*, ed. by Alice Walker and John Dover Wilson (London: Cambridge UP, 1971), pp. ix-lvi (p. xlv), Mozorov in Walker & Wilson, p. 46.

⁵²⁹ Walker & Wilson, p. 45.

⁵³⁰ William Shakespeare, *Othello* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2003), 1. 1. 58-59, 3. 3. 103-108, 2. 1. 267.

⁵³¹ Norman Sanders, ‘Introduction’, in William Shakespeare, *Othello* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2003), pp. 1-61 (p. 14).

⁵³² Poe, ‘the Man’, pg. 405

⁵³³ Pierre Corneille, *Le Cid*, trans. by Joseph Ruther (London: John Haviland, 1637), 2.4. 60-63.

of her fiancé. Poe's translation as 'Weep, weep my eyes! It is no time to laugh, | For half myself has buried the other half', and Joseph Ruther's 1637 English translation of 'Weepe, weepe, mine eyes, melt into tears my braine | Halfe of my life, the other halfe has slain' outline an internal strife within the mind, or 'braine', between two constituting figures, in which one has 'slaine' or buried the other.⁵³⁴

On one hand, these tropes pertaining to a 'black / white' identificatory collapse and to a dipartite self can be read within a theological framework. Recalling that Schlegel defines Othello as a 'double man' divided between the 'higher and lower sphere', Poe's quotation from *Le Cid* can be read as a reflection of this spiritual division, with the one 'half' of the self, the self of the 'lower sphere', causing the destruction of the other half. Read in this light, the destruction of John A.B.C. Smith is caused not only by the Kickpapoo Indians, but is a consequence of actions inspired by the 'lower sphere of the self, the mortal, 'unelevated' soul that lacks rationality and charity. In addition, this dipartite self is Poe's commentary that the self is built on 'feet of clay' without a spiritual essentiality, and in this sense undermines the pretence of a civilized self. On the other hand, Poe's references to *Le Cid* and *Othello* point up an anxiety about a lack of delimitations between the colonizing self and colonized other. Specifically, if the self can be constructed like Othello's, between a 'higher' and 'lower' sphere, and if Native and African Americans are characterized by this lower sphere, then the implication persists that civilized Anglo-America also shares an identificatory component with the 'savage' races and that this interior 'savage' could gain the 'upper hand' over the 'moral man'. This conflation between the 'savage' and the civilized grows even closer when considered within the ideological and political context in which property constitutes the self, and that during the course of Jackson's democracy private property, including slaves, became the condition for voting privileges and full citizenship over land ownership. These aspects related to private property, and the identificatory conflation between colonizer and colonized become significant in the final scene of the narrator's knowledge quest to uncover the 'mystery' of John A.B.C. Smith.

⁵³⁴ Poe, 'Pinakidia', p. 496, Corneille, 3.3.6-7.

The Narrator's Knowledge Quest in 'The Man That Was Used Up'

The epistemological theme in 'The Man That Was Used Up' is expressed in the narrator's quest to find Smith's true identity, with nationalistic discourse blocking the way to his goal. This discursive obfuscation is suggested in 'The Man That Was Used Up' by the barrage of gossip the narrator penetrates in order to discover the truth about Smith. As Poe says about the gossip in *Marginalia*, 'it was not properly said that "he commences his discourse by jumping *in media res*."' For clearly, your gossip commences not at all. He is begun. He is already begun. He is always begun. In the matter of end he is indeterminate'.⁵³⁵ In relation to 'The Man That Was Used Up', the narrator's knowledge quest is also an attempt to penetrate an 'indeterminate' discourse repelling him from true knowledge; and what this discourse blocks access to is a site of subjective anxiety. Specifically, this site is the point where American justifications to its national territory falter, particularly, and in relation to Poe's philosophy, because its claims to the land are based on worldly, material gain, and not an essentializing Ideal, Spiritual 'root'. As a subject defined by the national context drawn by Poe, the narrator also lacks the ability to achieve the soul's elevation and understand Ideality. Writing from within this perspective, Poe emphasizes his idea that 'spirituality' and 'Ideality' are things beyond epistemological categorization, particularly beyond epistemologies that emphasize specularity. What this means, is that for the narrator, concepts such as Spirituality or Ideality are experienced as nonexistence, death or mortality, and represent what epistemology always comes up against and fails to comprehend.

This connection between a knowledge system that emphasizes ocular evidence and an internalized site of mortality, or nonexistence, is suggested in the narrator's initial encounter with General Smith. As the General overwhelms and occupies the narrator's mental focus, his impressive outward appearance is described in terms of negative comparison: his hair is the 'no color' of 'jetty black', his whiskers are 'unimaginable', his mouth is 'unequaled', and the legs are '*ne plus ultra*' of good legs.⁵³⁶ Smith has 'neither too much flesh nor too little – neither

⁵³⁵ Poe, *Marginalia*, p. 365.

⁵³⁶ Poe, 'The Man', pp. 405-406.

rudeness nor fragility’.⁵³⁷ This paradoxical conflation between presence and anti-presence not only foreshadows the narrator’s final discovery that Smith’s exteriority is composed around nothing, or an ‘exceedingly odd-looking bundle of something’, but recalls the *unthoughtlike thoughts* and *thoughts of thoughts* Poe denotes in *Eureka* in reference to his concept of Attraction, or the interconnectedness of all matter in the universe.

For Poe, the Universe originated from an original, unary particle that God willed into being then diffused into Multiplicity: ‘All Things and All Thoughts of Things, with all their ineffable Multiplicity of Relation, sprang at once into being from the primordial and irrelative *One*’.⁵³⁸ The counter reaction of this ‘Big Bang’ theory is that the Multiplicity of particles gravitate ‘each to each’, as opposed to a geographical centre,⁵³⁹ as they attempt to rejoin the ‘lost parent’ of the principle Unity. As Poe explains, ‘every atom of every body attracts every other atom, both of its own and of every other body’, thereby resulting in a ‘sympathy’ of each atom with ‘every other atom, and with each and with all at the same time, and for ever, and according to a determinate law of which the complexity [. . .] is utterly beyond the grasp of the imagination of man’. Since such concepts cannot be imagined in their entirety, Poe refers to them as an *unthoughtlike thoughts*.⁵⁴⁰ These *unthoughtlike thoughts* juxtapose *thoughts of thoughts*, or signifiers standing in for what cannot be understood. Taking as examples ‘infinite’, ‘God’, and ‘spirit’, Poe explains that such terms are ‘by no means the expression of an idea, but of an effort at one’, standing ‘for the possible attempt at an impossible conception. Man needed a term by which to point out the *direction* of this effort – the cloud behind which lay, for ever invisible, the *object* of this attempt’.⁵⁴¹

While these *unthoughtlike thoughts* and *thoughts of thoughts* reflect ‘scientific’ meditations, they also foreground epistemological limitations by ‘pointing out the direction’ to an exteriority of knowledge systems. Poe posits an inimicality between ‘intuition’ – or the ‘conviction resulting from deductions or inductions of which ‘the processes [are] so shadowy as to’ escape ‘consciousness’, elude ‘reason’, and defy ‘expression’ – and inductive reasoning,

⁵³⁷ Poe, ‘The Man’, p. 406.

⁵³⁸ Edgar Allan Poe, *Eureka*, in *The Works of Edgar Allan Poe*, ed. by John H. Ingram, 4 vols (Edinburgh: Adam and Charles Black, 1875), III, pp. 91-196 (p. 121).

⁵³⁹ Poe, *Eureka*, p. 120.

⁵⁴⁰ Poe, *Eureka*, p. 117-118.

⁵⁴¹ Poe, *Eureka*, p. 103.

which stifles ‘intuitive leaps’ through its emphasis on sensory, empirical means.⁵⁴² Taking particular issue with the deductive reasoning of Jeremy Bentham Mill, Poe attempts to destabilize the validity of Mill’s deductive axioms by questioning inherent unquestionability: citing Mill’s axiom that the ‘ability or inability to conceive [. . .] is *in no case* to be received as a criterion for axiomatic truth’, Poe considers it alongside the ‘unquestionable’ ‘quintessence of axiomatic undeniability’, namely that ‘contradictions cannot both be true -- that is, cannot coexist in nature’; for example, ‘a tree must be either a tree or not a tree [. . .] it cannot be at the same time a tree *and* not a tree’, the reason being, ‘because we find it impossible to conceive that a tree can be anything else than a tree or not a tree’.⁵⁴³ However, if the ‘ability or inability to conceive, is in no case to be taken as a criterion for axiomatic truth’, then, according to Poe, all Mill’s argumentation is ‘at sea without a rudder’, because it fails to encompass an impossible paradox.⁵⁴⁴ For Poe, then, epistemology reaches its limit at the site of such paradoxes that it cannot encompass.

Depicted as a man and not a man, Smith stands at an epistemological limit, the unity of a man formed from multiple parts around a ‘nondescript’, a hybrid of what can and cannot be known. Indicating Smith’s hybrid status is the gap between his emphatic remarkability and the narrator’s inability to determine why he is indeed remarkable. While the narrator notes that Smith is ‘a *remarkable* man – a *very* remarkable man – indeed one of the *most* remarkable men of the age’, he cannot specify what that ‘*remarkable* something’ is or the ‘odd air of *je ne sais quoi* which hung about’ the General.⁵⁴⁵ This inability to comprehend the ‘whole’, ‘entire individuality’ of Smith hints at an inherency located beyond an ocular rational knowledge system.⁵⁴⁶ Correlating this inherency with America’s struggle for land are the comments and mannerisms of the narrator’s ‘kind friend’ who, after explaining how Smith earned his heroic reputation in ‘the late tremendous swamp-fight, away down south, with the Bugaboo and Kickapoo Indians’, ‘open[s] his eyes to some extent’.⁵⁴⁷ In mentioning the Kickapoos and swamp-fight the friend recalls the Second Seminole War, a bitter, drawn-out conflict resultant from Jackson’s Removal Policy, while ‘opening his eyes to some extent’ ironically calls into

⁵⁴² Poe, *Eureka*, pp. 95-101.

⁵⁴³ Poe, *Eureka*, pp. 97-98.

⁵⁴⁴ Poe, *Eureka*, p. 99.

⁵⁴⁵ Poe, ‘The Man’, p. 406.

⁵⁴⁶ Poe, ‘The Man’, p. 405.

⁵⁴⁷ Poe, ‘The Man’, p. 406.

relief the limit of a knowledge system that emphasizes ocular evidence.⁵⁴⁸ The fusion of these two tropes together implies that the site inaccessible to, and blocked by, epistemology is related to the national struggle for land. More specifically, though, the association of the obfuscating discourse with the jingoism of ‘blood and thunder, and all that!’ implies an ideological blocked reflexivity that prohibits cognizance of the site of subjective nonentity, or subjective uncertainty, for nationalistic ends.⁵⁴⁹ In this regard, the interruptive word ‘Man’, with all its denotations of rationality, property ownership, and national belonging, is metonymic for the influx of screening ‘knowledge’, such as the ‘greater general information’ and ‘points of mechanical invention’ the General’s monologue ‘invariably comes back to’ when the narrator attempts to understand ‘the mysterious circumstances attending the Bugaboo war’.⁵⁵⁰

Yet while this internalized site of nonentity is precluded from rational understanding Poe still connects it to the subject as written within an ideological and epistemological framework. The narrator’s statement, ‘she went on, and I – I went off’ and repetition of the phrase ‘*tête-à-tête*’ imply a doubled self, while the phrase ‘will I nill I’ implies a self conjoined with a site of nonexistence, recalling the internal conflict suggested by *Le Cid*.⁵⁵¹ The narrator’s knowledge quest also reiterates the void/ existence conjuncture because it begins with reference to mortality and culminates in corporeal reconstruction, thereby allegorizing the construction of the ‘artificial’ self around the mortal, unredeemed soul. The scene of mortality that commences the knowledge quest is implied when the narrator converses with Miss Tabitha T. and is interrupted by the Reverend Doctor Drummummup’s Biblical citation of Job 14:1-2: ‘man that is born of a woman hath but a short time to live; he cometh up and is cut down like a flower!’.⁵⁵² While the reference to Job foregrounds mortality, the citation itself holds secondary implications related to death when considering the context in which it was commonly used. Specifically, ‘The Order for the Burial of the Dead’ in the American version of *The Book of Common Prayer* instructs recitation of Job 14:1-2 when ‘the Corps is made ready to be laid in the Earth’, thereby

⁵⁴⁸ Mabbott, Notes for ‘The Man’, p. 389, John M. Coward, ‘Second Seminole War (Florida), 1835-1842’, in *The Greenwood Library of American War Reporting: The Indian Wars and the Spanish-American War*, ed. by John M. Coward and W. Joseph Campbell, 8 vols (London: Greenwood Press, 2005), IV, 27-28 (p. 28).

⁵⁴⁹ Poe, ‘The Man’, p. 406.

⁵⁵⁰ Poe, ‘The Man’, p. 407.

⁵⁵¹ Poe, ‘The Man’, pp. 407-410.

⁵⁵² Mabbott, Notes for ‘The Man’, p. 390.

emphasizing tropes of the Adamic, mortal soul.⁵⁵³ The full passage from which Poe borrows includes the statement ‘in the midst of life we are in death’, further underscoring a life/ death symbiosis; and these funerary undertones are deepened by the narrator’s puns that he ‘shudders recalling’ (*horesco referens*) and does not ‘scruple to seize’.⁵⁵⁴ The knowledge quest builds on this site of mortality in its progression to the Rantipole Theatre, ‘setting up’ a parallel between identities constructed around nonexistence and performed characters lacking real interiority. During the card game with this Mrs. Kathleen O’Trump, subjective lack of interiority is again suggested when Mr. Tattle has ‘*no hearts*’, while the unification between existence and mortality is reiterated in O’Trump’s status as a widow, a suggestion that her ‘other half’ is ‘buried’.⁵⁵⁵

Bringing into relief and emphasizing the site of the mangled body as an epistemological border, as well as themes pertaining to the futility of attempting to locate certainty beyond empirical – especially ocular – means, is Poe’s reference to Othello.⁵⁵⁶ Similar to the nameless narrator, Othello is also on a knowledge quest to locate absolute evidence that could quell anxiety by providing epistemological closure and, more specifically, identificatory grounding: just as the narrator is put ‘into a pitiable state of agitation’ when confronted with ‘the slightest appearance of mystery – of any point [he] cannot exactly comprehend’, Othello ‘cannot bear to let things remain vague and undetermined. He must *know*. This is his anxiety’, especially as it relates to Desdemona’s fidelity and by extension, his own identity as a rational man.⁵⁵⁷ However, Othello’s quest for absolute knowledge fails because of a methodology that emphasizes ocular evidence. As Othello states, ‘I’ll see before I doubt; when I doubt, prove’ for ‘to be once in doubt | Is once to be resolved’.⁵⁵⁸ Iago perverts Othello’s system of knowledge, so that ‘in the event, he *sees* nothing definitive’.⁵⁵⁹ He forces Othello to rely on ‘imputation and

⁵⁵³ *The Book of Common Prayer, and Administration of the Sacraments, and Other Rites and Ceremonies, As revised and proposed to the Use of The Protestant Episcopal Church, At a Convention of the Said Church in the States of New-York, New-Jrsey [sic], Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, and South-Carolina* (London: J. Debrett (?), 1789), Chap. 20.

⁵⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵⁵ Poe, ‘The Man’, pp. 408-409.

⁵⁵⁶ Mabbott, Notes for ‘The Man’, p. 390.

⁵⁵⁷ Poe, ‘The Man’, p. 405, Jay L. Halio, ‘Reading Othello Backwards’, in *Othello: New Critical Essays*, ed. by Philip C. Kolin, pp. 391-400, (p. 396)

⁵⁵⁸ *Othello* 3. 3. 178-94 in Halio, p. 393.

⁵⁵⁹ Halio, p. 397.

strong circumstances', claiming it would be 'impossible he should see' ocular proof of her fidelity: 'Would you, the supervisor, grossly gape on? Behold her topped?'.⁵⁶⁰

Representing the limit of Othello's epistemology is Desdemona's body, an 'object' of study from which Othello attempts to derive an absolute meaning. As Elizabeth Gruber points out, the violent deaths of women in Othello are 'crucial to the "discovery" of knowledge'.⁵⁶¹ While questions regarding the identity, existence and essence of women are raised in 'calumniated-woman plays', the real emphasis is 'upon the torment and desire of man: it is his knowledge' 'that defines the epistemological journey', and it his proper subjectivity that allows him to target a 'feminized' object 'of knowledge'.⁵⁶² According to Gruber, Othello is annoyed that 'Desdemona's body displays no outward signs of infidelity – despite his efforts to read the word "whore" on her flesh', and his knowledge quest, in a sense, is a demand for his wife's body to 'be turned inside out, so that [her] presumed transgressions can be displayed'.⁵⁶³ Such demands to read interiority of meaning through Desdemona's dismemberment are suggested in Othello's threats to 'tear her all to pieces!' and 'chop her into messes'.⁵⁶⁴ However, Othello's demand to find meaning inside his wife's disarticulate body is also a desire to find the spiritual completion of the self, because Desdemona is also appurtenant to the completion of his own identity as a man; as Iago notes, 'Our general's wife is now the general' for he 'hath devoted and given | up himself to the contemplation, mark and denotement of her | parts and graces'.⁵⁶⁵

When read against Poe's text, *Othello* brings into relief important themes also evinced in 'The Man That Was Used Up': like Othello, the narrator's knowledge quest is limited by a knowledge system that emphasizes ocular evidence; he is frustrated that the anxious 'mystery' of Smith's appearance is not immediately knowable; and his revelation of knowledge is correlated with a body torn 'all to pieces'. However, even when the narrator comes to the site of disarticulation and 'stagger[s] into an armchair' with 'staring eyes', the truth of what Smith's overwhelming presence occludes still cannot be fully known; namely, the narrator discovers the 'nondescript', something which literally cannot be remarked upon, and around which Smith's

⁵⁶⁰ Shakespeare, *Othello*, 3. 3. 403, 3. 3. 396-97.

⁵⁶¹ Elizabeth Gruber, 'Insurgent Flesh: Epistemology and Violence in *Othello* and *Mariam*', *Women's Studies: An Inter-Disciplinary Journal*, 32 (2003), 393-410 (p. 393).

⁵⁶² Gruber, p. 394.

⁵⁶³ Gruber, p. 404.

⁵⁶⁴ Shakespeare, *Othello*, 3. 3. 432, 4. 1. 432.

⁵⁶⁵ Shakespeare, *Othello*, 2. 3. 286-89.

identity is constructed.⁵⁶⁶ This ‘nondescript’ represents an interior site of nonentity, or death, replacing the divine aspect, and also signifying the point where subjectivity becomes ungrounded without the vital and cohering link of property. In this regard, the ‘nondescript’ recalls Johnson’s wound – the death wound that will not bring death – because it symbolizes a paradoxical point that epistemological systems cannot fully encompass as well as a condition that national ideology will not allow to be known: that of being both a subject and not a subject, or a man and not a man. In a sense, although internalized, the ‘nondescript’ represents an epistemological frontier where national discursive identity becomes ungrounded, as evinced through discussion of the various textual references Poe ties to the American trope of the ‘used up’ self.

When analyzing epistemological frontiers as indicative of the limits of discursive identity, and how these frontiers and limitations coincide with an American disjuncture from the land in ‘The Man That Was Used Up’, a point of interpretive access to Poe’s tale is his reference to Defoe’s *Robinson Crusoe* and the manner in which he conflates it with Byron’s *Manfred*: when Miss Bas-Bleau exclaims ‘It’s Man-Fred, I say, and not at all by any means Man-Friday’ the narrator disputes her point, deciding that ‘the true title’ ‘of a certain poetical drama of Lord Byron’s’ is actually ‘Man-Friday’.⁵⁶⁷ In ‘The Fashionable Thirties: Poe’s Satire in “The Man That Was Used Up”’, Ronald T. Curran notes that the confusion between titles reflects a ‘literary controversy’ within superficial society that ‘cannot keep [its] titles and characters straight’, and flaunts its ‘contemporary tast[es]’ for ‘romances and stories of adventure and travel [that] had begun to replace poetry and didactic essays in the 30s and 40s’.⁵⁶⁸ While the title ‘mix-up’ does indicate a bemused, superficial society, it also has a secondary meaning; namely that the interchangeable titles indicate thematic similarities between the texts, and that by suggesting the ‘true title’ of Byron’s work is actually ‘Man-Friday’, the ‘true meaning’ of *Manfred* lies in Crusoe’s colonial relationship with the Native American Other.

Byron’s *Manfred* brings into relief Poe’s own concerns regarding identity as determined by epistemological limitations, and sites of non-entity, most prominently associated with death, located within the self. As Ernest Hartley Coleridge notes, ‘Byron’s *Manfred* is “in the succession” of scholars who have reached the limits of natural and legitimate science, and who

⁵⁶⁶ Poe, ‘The Man’, p. 411.

⁵⁶⁷ Poe, ‘The Man’, p. 410.

⁵⁶⁸ Curran, p. 16.

essay the supernatural in order to penetrate and comprehend the “hidden things of darkness”.⁵⁶⁹ This tension between ‘the limits of natural and legitimate science’ and the ‘things of darkness’ is appurtenant to the over-arching theme that the continual accumulation of knowledge obfuscates one’s own mortality: as the First Destiny says, ‘knowledge is not happiness, and science | But an exchange of ignorance for that | Which is another kind of ignorance’; and Manfred reiterates this theme in his statement, ‘I plunged amidst Mankind – Forgetfulness | I sought in all, save where ‘tis to be found – | and that I have to learn – my Sciences, | My long pursued and superhuman art’.⁵⁷⁰ In other words, ‘sciences and art’ are only ‘ignorance’ and ‘forgetfulness’ of the more profound ignorance and forgetfulness of non-existence. Manfred’s desire to break his epistemological ‘ignorance’ and affront ‘Death’ manifests in a ‘death wish’ in which he craves ‘self-oblivion’ but is always held back by ‘a single hair’ that does ‘not break’; yet when he does broach the frontiers of mortality and knowledge he finds the sites marked by disarticulate bodies: in ‘the caves of Death’ Manfred draws ‘Conclusions most forbidden’ from the ‘withered bones, and skulls, and heaped up dust’; and when it is his time to expire he tells the Spirit, ‘what ye take | shall be ta’en limb by limb’.⁵⁷¹

By referencing *Manfred* Poe establishes a thematic parallel between his own and Byron’s texts, namely with regard to how the limit of epistemologically defined identity is represented by sites of death and indicated by the disarticulate body. In ‘The Man That Was Used Up’ this identificatory and epistemological limit is marked by Smith. Described as an ‘exceedingly odd-looking bundle of something’ and ‘the nondescript’, Smith is literally a ‘point [one] cannot exactly comprehend’, and thereby eludes systems of knowledge.⁵⁷² What *can* be remarked upon, and what makes Smith ‘one of the *most* remarkable men of the age’, are the artificial signifiers that constitute his body: the ‘cork leg’ ‘screwed on in a trice’, the ‘shoulders and bosom’ slipped over his frame, his ‘capital scratch’ from De L’Orme’s, his ‘*good* set’ of teeth, and an eye that needs to be screwed in.⁵⁷³ This conflation between the remarkable and inexplicable constitutes Smith as representative of an impossible site – a ‘*je ne sais quoi*’ – against which language and knowledge constantly come up, but cannot encompass; and, alluding again to *Manfred*, he is a

⁵⁶⁹ Ernest Hartley Coleridge, p. 81.

⁵⁷⁰ Lord Byron, *Manfred*, in *Poetical Works of Lord Byron*, ed. by Ernest Hartley Coleridge, 7 vols (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1901), IV, 83-136, 2. 5. 61-63, 2. 2. 144-49.

⁵⁷¹ Byron, *Manfred*, 2. 2. 139, 1. 1. 145, 2. 2. 139, 2. 2. 80, 2. 2. 83, 2. 2. 82, 3. 4. 103-104.

⁵⁷² Poe, ‘The Man’, pp. 411, 405.

⁵⁷³ Poe, ‘The Man’, pp. 406, 411, 411, 412, 412.

hybrid of not only what can and cannot be known, but life and death as well. Recalling Hamlet's meditation on Yorick's skull, when he states, 'now get you to my lady's chamber, and tell her, | let her paint an inch thick', implying that life is painted around the kernel of the ultimate unknown, death, Smith is also constructed around an unknown nothingness, or 'nondescript'.⁵⁷⁴ Indeed, John A.B.C. Smith's name itself implies the beginning of language and knowledge, suggesting that he represents the point where language is fused with nothingness or nonentity; and this life/ death conflation is furthered in Manfred's description of himself as 'A blighted trunk upon a curséd root, | Which but supplies a feeling to Decay – | And to be thus, eternally but thus'.⁵⁷⁵

Poe transports *Manfred*'s disarticulate bodies to a colonial context by way of *Robinson Crusoe*, allusively collapsing the two texts in the narrator's discussion with Miss Bas-Bleau, and conflating *Manfred*'s tropes with the Lockean conceptions of property and self that figure in Defoe's novel. Of especial significance to Defoe's text are Locke's ideas concerning ownership of property through the investment of labor. Crusoe echoes Locke's idea that the God-given right to create property from Nature extends as far as one can enjoy and 'make use of it to any advantage of life before it spoils' when he says, 'that all the good things of this world are of no further good to us, than as they are for our use: and that whatever we heap indeed to give to others, we enjoy as much as we can use and no more'; and he creates items of use through his investment of labor, such as the 'abundance of things' made from his 'infinite labour', or the plank boards made by investing 'time and labour'.⁵⁷⁶ Crusoe also extends his 'right of possession' over the land he utilizes and cultivates, referring to himself as the 'king and lord of all this country indefeasibly' and noting 'I might call myself king or emperor over the whole country which I had possession of; there was no rival; I had no competitor, none to dispute sovereignty or command with me'.⁵⁷⁷ By asserting this right of possession over the island Crusoe enacts the Lockean tenet that when one subdues the land he 'annex[es] to it something that [is] his *Property*, which another [has] no Title to, nor could without injury take from him'.⁵⁷⁸

⁵⁷⁴ Poe, 'The Man', p. 406, William Shakespeare, *Hamlet, Prince of Denmark* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2003) 1. 1. 163-64.

⁵⁷⁵ *Manfred*, 1. 1. 68-70.

⁵⁷⁶ Locke, 'Property', p. 290, Defoe, pp. 166, 86.

⁵⁷⁷ Defoe, p. 128, 128, 100, 128, 165.

⁵⁷⁸ Locke, 'Property', p. 291.

Crusoe's assumptions to possession are unsettled, however, when the discovery of a savage's footprint makes him feel 'like a man perfectly confused and out of' himself, 'not feeling' 'the ground' he 'went on'.⁵⁷⁹ Here, Crusoe experiences feelings of subjective incoherence, of being 'confused and outside himself', when a 'competitor' troubles his sense of sole possession of the island. This Other presence is immediately associated with subjective annihilation, or being 'used up', and property loss, as noted by Crusoe's reflections on the footprint:

Then terrible thoughts racked my imagination about [the savages] having found my boat, and that there were people here; and that if so, I should certainly have them come again in greater numbers and devour me; that if it should happen so that they should not find me, yet they would find my enclosure, destroy all my corn, carry away all my flock of tame goats, and I should perish at last for mere want.⁵⁸⁰

Crusoe's fears of corporeal annihilation and loss of sole possession of the island are physically symbolized when he comes upon, 'skulls, hands, feet and other bones of human bodies' at 'a place where there had been a fire made, and a circle dug in the earth, like a cock-pit, where it is supposed the savages had sat down to their inhuman feastings'.⁵⁸¹ This connection between physical annihilation and property loss is explicitly linked with national struggles for sovereignty when Crusoe asks, 'Well, Friday, and what does your nation do with the men they take? Do they carry them away and eat them as these do?' Friday answers, 'Yes, my nation eat mans too, eat all up'.⁵⁸² The connection between national dominance and physical dismemberment is repeated when Crusoe explains that the savages 'never eat any men, but such as come to fight with them, and are taken in battle', and mentioned again when a beach 'covered with human bones, the ground dyed with blood' and 'great pieces of flesh left here and there, half-eaten, mangled, and scorched' represent a savage nation's 'triumphant feast' and 'victory over their enemies'.⁵⁸³ This correlation between devoured bodies and national dominance is emphasized further when Crusoe and Friday pass over the border zone between Spain and France and are attacked by

⁵⁷⁹ Defoe, p. 198.

⁵⁸⁰ Defoe, p. 201.

⁵⁸¹ Defoe, pp. 212-213.

⁵⁸² Defoe, p. 276.

⁵⁸³ Defoe, pp. 287, 266.

anthropomorphized wolves who devour a man's head and 'upper part of his body', and charge, 'roaring and open-mouthed to devour' an unsettled Crusoe who worries about being 'torn to pieces'.⁵⁸⁴ Corporeal dismemberment and annihilation in *Robinson Crusoe* thereby represent not only property loss, but a national struggle in which the loser is devoured, metaphorically consumed, and incorporated into a larger, more powerful country. Through this process of domination 'the savage' is economically incorporated as a slave and property, positioned in a Europeanized order of signification and knowledge, and subjected in a Master-slave dialectic.⁵⁸⁵ As Crusoe states, Friday 'made all the signs to me of subjection, servitude, and submission imaginable, to let me know how much he would serve me as long as he lived'.⁵⁸⁶

Crusoe conceals the dismembered bodies because they indicate the point where his right to the land and property is contested and denaturalized; specifically, he has Friday hide the disarticulate bodies, or 'bury the barbarous remains of [the cannibals'] barbarous feast', because he 'could not bear to see them'.⁵⁸⁷ As Crusoe states, Friday 'defaced the very appearance of the savages being there; so that when I went by again, I could scarce know where it was'.⁵⁸⁸ When we foreground how the disarticulate body as a representation of disrupted colonial assumptions to the land is repressed by Crusoe, we see where Poe links Defoe's text with Byron's *Manfred*. Just as the 'withered bones' and 'skulls' indicate 'conclusions most forbidden' for Manfred, Crusoe attempts to hide the 'great pieces of flesh left here and there, half-eaten, mangled, and scorched' because they indicate the possibility of dispossession from his property and the denaturalization of coherent subjectivity. By conflating Manfred's knowledge quest for the 'dark things' beyond epistemological limitations with Crusoe's repression of the disarticulate body, Poe indicates that 'The Man That Was Used Up' is also structured as a knowledge quest to discover the 'forbidden' site where American subjectivity falls apart against the impossible 'nondescript' that is inaccessible to knowledge. That this 'nondescript' is internal to the self is suggested by reference to Manfred, who also positions 'decay' or death, the ultimate unknown to epistemology, within the self, while its relation to the colonial struggle for land is indicated by the reference to *Robinson Crusoe*. For Poe, then, the point of nonentity around which identity is constructed is obscured from the self by the very epistemologies that constitute the self, thereby

⁵⁸⁴ Defoe, p. 384, 387.

⁵⁸⁵ Defoe, p. 265.

⁵⁸⁶ Defoe, p. 265.

⁵⁸⁷ Defoe, p. 310.

⁵⁸⁸ Defoe, p. 311.

precluding any totalizing self-knowledge; or as Manfred states, men are ‘half dust, half deity’ until ‘Mortality predominates, | And men are – what they name not to themselves’.⁵⁸⁹

While the final scene of the narrator’s knowledge quest correlates Smith’s dismembered body with epistemological limitation, it also ties together thematic strands related to: subjectivity as contingent on property ownership, the destabilization of national identity due to a disrupted relationship with the land, and the lacking theologically-defined essentiality of the self. In one respect, Smith’s reconstitution through designer prosthetics by ‘Pettit’, ‘Ducrow’, ‘Thomas’, etc., and by his servant, Pompey, relates to contemporary debates about private property, instead of land ownership, becoming the new requisite in Jacksonian democracy for full suffrage and citizenship. Smith’s literal reconstruction by his private property separates him from the spark of divinity that Poe sees as appurtenant to the investment of poetic labour into the land. This reconstruction by private property points as well to a racial identificatory collapse between Anglo- and African-Americans based on the Lockean ideology that property constitutes the self; and this collapse can tie into fears about the ‘savage’, or ‘lower sphere’ gaining the ‘upper hand’ over the ‘moral man’. The idea of the ‘lower sphere’ usurping the ‘moral man’ may be more fully brought to light by considering paragraphs edited from modern versions of ‘The Man That Was Used Up’, but included in the original publications from 1839 to 1842. These paragraphs follow Smith’s statement, ‘I really believe you don’t know me at all’:

‘No – no – *no!*’ said I, getting as close to the wall as possible, and holding up both hands by way of expostulation; ‘don’t know you – know you – know you – *don’t* know you all! *Where’s* your master?’ here I gave an impatient squint towards the negro, still keeping a tight eye on the bundle.

‘He! he! he! he-aw! he-aw! he-aw!’ cachinnated that delectable specimen of the human family, with his mouth fairly extended from ear to ear, and with his forefinger held up close to his face, and levelled at the object of my apprehension, as if he were taking aim at it with a pistol.

‘He! He! He! He-aw! he-aw! he-aw! – What, you want Mass Smif? Why, dar’s him!’.⁵⁹⁰

⁵⁸⁹ *Manfred*, 1. 2. 40-46.

⁵⁹⁰ Thomas Ollive Mabbott, Footnotes to ‘The Man That Was Used Up’, in *Collected Works of*

The uncertainty between colonizer and colonized is emphasized in the edited paragraphs when the narrator looks at both the servant and the 'bundle' and asks, '*Where's your master?*', while Pompey's action of levelling his 'forefinger' at Smith as though 'taking aim' with a 'pistol' exemplifies the 'lower sphere' of the self gaining the 'upper hand'. That Pompey represents the 'lower' aspects of the self is given in his exaggeratedly dehumanized condition, with his donkey-like laugh, and the narrator's ironic reference to him as a 'delectable specimen of the human family', while Smith's invectives against Pompey indicate his desire to deny the 'savage', 'lower', and irrational aspect of his self. The violence implied in Smith's language to Pompey reflects not only America's campaign against the 'Bugaboos', or 'irrational fears', but speaks to the theological crux of Poe's tale: that is, the 'lower sphere' of the human soul needs to be elevated through love and charity in order to reach the cohering and immortalizing Ideality. Suppression of the 'savage' aspects of the self without the elevating powers of the Holy Spirit, or what Schlegel would term 'religion', establishes a false, artificial self without a naturalizing 'root'. Again, though, Poe paints this violence and suppression as characteristic of American society as a whole, and just as Smith tries to deny the 'lower' aspects of his own identity, the narrator tries to deny the constructed, artificial nature of himself by denying Smith, telling him, 'No – no – *no!* [. . .] don't know you – know you – know you – *don't* know you all!', in response to Smith's repeated question, 'Strange you shouldn't know me though, isn't it?'.⁵⁹¹ In spite of the narrator's denial, though, the echoing dialogue between himself and Smith underscores their connection: when Smith states that he swallowed his teeth 'when the big Bugaboo rammed me down with the butt end of his rifle', the narrator repeats, 'Butt end! ram down!! my eye!!', to which Smith echoes, 'O yes, by the by, my eye'.⁵⁹²

What is also noteworthy in Pompey's implied act of violence is the way it recollects Ransom Clarke's final wound by the African-American fighter during the Dade Ambush, connecting Smith's condition to a site where the nation's ownership of its territory is uncertain, as well as to the correlated recurrent trope in early American literature of corporeal dismemberment. This connection is furthered when Smith lays the blame for his mangled

Edgar Allan Poe, ed. by Thomas Ollive Mabbott, 3 vols (London: Belknap Press, 1978), II, pp. 378-389 (p. 387).

⁵⁹¹ Poe, 'The Man', p. 411.

⁵⁹² Poe, 'The Man', p. 412.

condition at the feet of the Kickapoos and Bugaboos who broke his teeth, gouged his eye, and ‘took the trouble to cut off at least seven eighth of [his] tongue’.⁵⁹³ Yet while Smith’s mangled body marks America’s unstable right to its lands, his reconstruction by his slave Pompey means that he is also literally realized by his property, signifying that his property must still be inalienable. By existing as both a subject and not a subject, or both a man and a ‘used up’ man, Smith is a creation of the same discourse that writes figures such as Colonel Johnson and Ransom Clarke, those whose perpetually wounded conditions signify a national anxiety surmounted by a natural ‘manliness’ that stems from their proximity to their own land; and this dipartite existence is re-emphasized by the hyphenated statement that implies a doubled self, ‘Brevet Brigadier-General John A.B.C. Smith was the man – was *the man that was used up*’.⁵⁹⁴ Poe thereby employs the trope of being ‘used up’ to illustrate the paradoxical condition of being an American subject, of having a predestined right to the land as well as an anxiety that the property is not rightfully owned.

Conclusion

In writing about ‘used up’ identity, Poe connects Brevet-Brigadier General John A.B.C. Smith with a trope repeated throughout colonial and early national American literature that indicates a national struggle for land as well as a battle to naturalize rational subjectivity. However, as indicated by Emmons’s *Tecumseh*, to be ‘used up’ also means to have no rightful claim to the New World. By depicting Smith as ‘used up’, and suggesting that ideological discourse obfuscates this site where white, rational identity comes apart, Poe indicates that American attempts to naturalize assumptions to its territories always-already fail and the national subject can only surmount and ‘bury’ the site where it loses coherence. Again, though, this is not to overly modernize Poe: this national failure to naturalize occurs because it lacks an essential element. In ‘Dissemination’, Homi Bhabha explains how the act of writing the nation involves a splitting of its ‘nation-people’ into, at once, the historic and staticized *objects* of a narrative that grounds authority from ‘the pre-given or constituted historical origin *in the past*’, and the *subjects* that must turn the ‘scraps, patches and rags of daily life’ into a contemporary ‘coherent

⁵⁹³ Poe, ‘The Man’, p. 412.

⁵⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

national culture' that obfuscates 'any prior or originary presence of the nation-people' in order to write itself as modern.⁵⁹⁵ In 'The Man That Was Used Up' a splitting of the national subject also occurs, between the cohesive, contemporary narrator and his disarticulate reflection who cannot properly claim the land, whose identity is ultimately grounded on nothing but an 'odd-looking bundle of something', and who, in short, cannot articulate the cultural 'scraps, patches and rags' into a coherent national self. By depicting this site that Jacksonian America attempts to bury, Poe disrupts the project of nation-building and marks where ideology and subjectivity are 'used up'.

⁵⁹⁵ Homi K. Bhabha, 'Dissemination', in *The Location of Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1994), 199-244, (pp. 208-209).

Chapter Six: Disarticulate Masculinity and Poe's Polemic Against Pantheism in *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym of Nantucket*

Introduction

After the death of the *Jane Guy*'s crew on Tsalal, Pym walks through a ravine and observes that the 'place was one of singular wildness, and its aspect brought to my mind the description given by travellers of those dreary regions marking the site of some degraded Babylon'.⁵⁹⁶ Pym's comparison of Tsalal with 'degraded Babylon' alludes to the Whore of Babylon in Revelations, or the judgement of the 'great whore that sitteth upon many waters', who is also called 'the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth'.⁵⁹⁷ The Whore of Babylon has several metaphoric meanings: as a harlot, she represents 'false religion and all the social practices involved in it'; simultaneously, she embodies a city in which merchants and sea-travellers gain material wealth, so her fall precipitates their financial loss.⁵⁹⁸ When she dies, 'the merchants of the earth' 'weep and mourn over her; for no man buyeth their merchandise anymore', and 'every shipmaster, and all the company in ships, and sailors, and as many as trade by sea' lament the fall of the 'great city' 'wherein were made rich all that had ships in the sea by reason of her costliness'.⁵⁹⁹ Revelations provides a lengthy list of property lost through the Whore of Babylon's fall, such as, 'gold, and silver, and precious stones', 'pearls, and fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet', and 'cinnamon, and odours, and ointment', as well as 'slaves, and souls of men', putting on par the spiritual aspect of humankind with physical, material goods.⁶⁰⁰ In addition to the theological and property-related meanings, the Whore of Babylon

⁵⁹⁶ Edgar Allan Poe, *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym of Nantucket* (Markham: Penguin, 1976), p. 230.

⁵⁹⁷ Revelations 17. 1, 17. 5, in *Brown's Self Interpreting Bible with Numerous Additional Notes*, ed. by Henry Cooke (Glasgow: Blackie & Son, 1859).

⁵⁹⁸ Kovacs & Rowland in Natasha O'Hear, 'Images of Babylon: A Visual History of the Whore in Late Medieval and Early Modern Art', in *From the Margins 2: Women of the New Testament and Their Afterlives*, ed. by Christine E Joynes and Christopher C. Rowland, *From the Margins* pp. 311-333 (p. 312).

⁵⁹⁹ Revelations 18. 11, 18. 17, 18. 19 in *Brown's*.

⁶⁰⁰ Revelations 18. 11-13 in *Brown's*.

also relates to national concerns, since the water ‘where the whore sitteth’ represents ‘peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues’.⁶⁰¹

Just as the Neoplatonic ideology is pinned together by a central female figure in ‘The Domain of Arnheim’, thematic strands are woven together in the figure of the Whore of Babylon in *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym*. The important difference between the two is that Ellison’s wife provides Ellison with the divinity that he can invest into the land because her love elevates his soul to a union with God, while, as a harlot, the Whore of Babylon embodies Pandemian love. In this regard, she is the antithesis of Poe’s idealized women, and instantiates ‘false religion’ in a twofold sense: by standing in for sentiments inimical to charity, and by idealizing property over the soul’s immortality. Her presence in *Pym* sounds a religious tenor, pointing to and underscoring the precluded Neoplatonic ideals of Beauty, charity and the Spirit within the world of Poe’s novel. The loss of these ideals, which inherently mean the loss of salvation, characterizes and delimits Pym’s journey of individuation from an identity established by property to one also constituted by the Holy Spirit and a union with God. Referring back to the *Lectures on Dramatic Art and Literature*, Schlegel states that ‘Religion is the root of human existence. Were it possible for man to renounce all religion, including that of which he is unconscious, and over which he has no control, he would become a mere surface without any internal substance’. While Pym’s journey is a quest to find the religious grounding of his ‘human existence’, it is also a movement ‘over which he has no control’, because it is unconsciously motivated by his mortal soul’s longing. Coincident with Pym’s attempted development from being a ‘mere surface without any internal substance’ to a person with a religious essence, is an allegory about Jacksonian America, in which Poe presents a nation preoccupied with creating property, but without the poetic sentiment to invest into the land, thereby reneging on its national Ideality. Further preventing the investment of the land with the poetic sentiment is an epistemology that Poe presents as preclusive to a true spiritual union with God and as a faulty method of theological understanding. Specifically, Poe criticizes pantheistic models of knowing, particularly Transcendentalism, for assuming that theological ideals, such as the soul and God, are collapsed into nature, and for their assertions of a poet’s absolute knowledge of such a divinity through the imagination.

⁶⁰¹ Revelations 17. 15 in *Brown’s*.

Set against this theological and philosophical backdrop is Pym's relationship with Dirk Peters and the colonial violence of Tsalal. As outlined in Chapter Three, Poe invalidates tribal claims to the land, but simultaneously privileges indigeneity as an aspect of national Ideality and prerequisite to an essentialized national identity, thereby necessitating its naturalized incorporation into the American self. This bipartite perspective of indigeneity is displayed in *Pym* through depictions of the Tsalalians and Peters, with the former embodying aboriginal irrationality and an inherent inability to invest nature with property, and the latter standing in for the indigenous aspect of the national root that must be recognized and incorporated into America. This chapter will examine dismembered male bodies vis-à-vis colonial contact in *Pym* against this dual perspective of indigeneity by utilizing methodologies laid out in previous chapters. Examination will involve discussion of *Pym*'s structure before outlining the pantheistic philosophies Poe debates against, and how this debate is enacted in both the novel's theological imagery and tropes pertaining to the creation of knowledge. Vis-à-vis this philosophical context, this chapter will then analyze Pym's journey of spiritual individuation, and then assess ideologies related to property and how they bear on scenes of violence and dismemberment, particularly in the Tsalal episodes of *Pym*. Discussion will then focus on the character of Dirk Peters as an embodiment of indigeneity that Poe portrays as necessarily incorporated into the American self in order to establish and claim national Ideality.

Structure of *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym of Nantucket*

Just as Poe's conceptions of teleology and identity are basically Neoplatonic, so is *Pym*'s literary structure. Poe organizes his novel in accordance with Neoplatonic ideas that affected literary works of the Renaissance. During the Renaissance, two of Augustine's Neoplatonic ideas of particular importance were: one, that God is 'the author of this universe', that He created the world as his literary work, and that this world was created according to a divine plan; and two, that all acts of creation require a preconceived idea.⁶⁰² These two ideas affected literary structures through the Renaissance doctrine that poetry is a mimesis of nature; and this doctrine,

⁶⁰² Augustine, I, 320.

in turn, led to the argument that if the world is a poem, and God a poet, then the mimetic poet must also be a god, and his poem must also be another world that echoes the harmonies of the universe.⁶⁰³ Maren-Sofie Røstvig explains this poetic reflection of the divine world: ‘Whenever nature is defined as the existing order of things, and when this order is believed to have been created by God according to a specific pattern, nature may be “imitated” by reproducing this pattern in the structure of the literary composition’.⁶⁰⁴ Under this supposition, syncretistic works dealt with Christian themes, but ordered them within an arithmological frame. One example of Neoplatonic structuring that also affects *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym* is an emphasis on the centre, as opposed to denouement, of the literary work, with the mid-point generally marked by referents of elevation, sovereignty, or balance. This emphasis on the narrative centre derives from an iconography of cosmic kingship, in which the Ptolemaic central cosmological positioning of the sun as the fourth of seven planets is conflated with the Christian notion of the *Sol iustitiae*, or Sun of justice, a reference to Christ’s return on judgement day as a mid-day sun. Such structuring invites chiastic schemes, such as ABCDCBA, and lends circularity to the literary work.⁶⁰⁵

An example of this chiastic structuring that also influences Poe’s corpus is Defoe’s *Robinson Crusoe*, with its pivotal point being the discovery of the footprint on the beach. Immediately behind and ahead of this midpoint is *Crusoe*’s island section. While the first part of this section follows *Crusoe*’s isolation and spiritual regeneration, the second part complements the first by showing *Crusoe* putting his Christianity into practice by converting Friday and confronting the cannibals. Such a structural pattern is modelled after the mimetic tradition discussed above, and it organizes the narrative events by tracing the moral progress of the main character.⁶⁰⁶

Pym’s structure has received previous critical attention. In the Introduction to the Penguin edition of *Pym*, Harold Beaver notices that with ‘perfect symmetry the two halves mirror each other, split down a central spine which (geographically) proves to be the equator and (fictionally) *Pym*’s rescue by the *Jane Guy*’, and he matches up corresponding events on both

⁶⁰³ Brooks, p. 9.

⁶⁰⁴ Maren-Sofie Røstvig, ‘Structure as prophecy: the influence of biblical exegesis upon theories of literary structure’, in *Silent Poetry: Essays in numerological analysis*, ed. by Alastair Fowler (London: Routledge, 1970), pp. 32-72 (p. 32).

⁶⁰⁵ Brooks, p. 13.

⁶⁰⁶ Brooks, pp. 19-25.

sides of this textual meridian: ‘the initial treachery (of mutiny and revenge on the *Grampus*) is mirrored by treachery and revenge on Tsalal; murderous Seymour, the black cook, by unscrupulous Too-wit, the black chief; Pym’s confinement in the hold, by his confinement in the hills’. This symmetrical structuring organizes a text that is far from ‘rambling and incohesive, as most earlier critics presumed’, and, for Beaver, ‘nothing could be more assured, more tightly woven or concise’ than the ‘matching images of these folded and reflecting halves’.⁶⁰⁷ Richard Kopley comments on *Pym*’s structure too, observing that it is ‘composed of two distinct halves’ organized around a ‘meaningful midpoint’ that Poe draws attention to with such words and phrases as, ‘half-breed’, ‘half certainty’, ‘half whine, half howl’, and variations thereof up to forty times in the novel.⁶⁰⁸ Although Kopley employs his interpretation to argue a more ‘psychobiographical’ point about Poe, his reading of *Pym*’s structure as providential is correct, and helps provide interpretive access into the novel.

The link between moral progress and structure in *Crusoe* is borrowed in *Pym*, and traces the protagonist’s innate spiritual drive to evolve from a mortal to an immortal soul through Ideality and the ‘life-giving Spirit’. However, this desire is destined to remain unconsummated, the journey and journal to remain incomplete, because Pym is delimited by a certain type of pantheistic epistemology. Embedded within such a knowledge system, Pym cannot comprehend ‘actual’ divinity, even while his soul desires an unconscious union with God. Harking back to ‘The Poetic Principle’, Pym is like the poet who can recreate the world’s ‘forms, and sounds, and colours, and odours, and sentiments’, but fails to ‘prove his divine title’, because there is ‘still something in the distance which he has been unable to obtain’. In other words, Pym’s soul is entrenched in the world of representation and unable to transcend it. Pym’s ‘prophecy’ speaks to both his desire for transcendence and the knowledge system that prevents it:

For the bright side of the painting I had a limited sympathy. My visions were of shipwreck and famine; of death or captivity among barbarian hordes; of a lifetime dragged out in sorrow and tears, upon some gray and desolate rock, in an ocean unapproachable and unknown. Such visions or desires – for they amounted to desires –

⁶⁰⁷ Harold Beaver, Introduction to *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym of Nantucket* (Markham: Penguin, 1976), pp. 7-33 (p. 29).

⁶⁰⁸ Richard Kopley, ‘Poe’s Pym-esque “A Tale of the Ragged Mountains”’, in *Poe and His Times: The Artist and His Milieu*, ed. by Benjamin Franklin Fisher (Baltimore: The Edgar Allan Poe Society, 1990), pp. 167-177 (p. 170).

are common, I have been assured, to the whole numerous race of the melancholy men – at the time of which I speak I regarded them only as prophetic glimpses of a destiny which I felt myself in a measure bound to fulfil.⁶⁰⁹

The logic of monomania and its connection to theology permeates Pym's 'visions' when he considers them to be 'prophetic' and attributes them to melancholia. Again, melancholia denotes religious anxiety about being precluded from the divine grace of God. It is likened to a 'spiritual sickness', with symptoms that include hallucinations of perdition, and can only be remedied by 'applying God's Word' to the 'distressed soul'. Like melancholia, monomania is also characterized by religious visions; but while melancholia's visions are attributed to more theological causes, monomania attributes them to a faulty epistemology 'infected' by a religious fantasy that prevents a 'true' knowledge of God. Pym's melancholic visions reveal his spiritual sickness and indicate that he is out of tune with his 'sphere' and beyond God's grace. Yet while (and because) these visions are symptomatic of a detachment from God's grace, they also gesture toward something 'beyond' the empirical world. Placed within an epistemological frame, these visions, or fantasies, signify the edge of knowledge, standing in for the Spiritual and ineffable. However, Pym's entrenchment in the representative world means he mistakes such fantasies for something similar to Beauty, that is, something that signifies and points to the 'life-giving Spirit'; and this substitution of Beauty for melancholic fantasy is further communicated by Pym's 'limited sympathy' for the 'bright side' of the 'painting', because paintings, for Schlegel, have the potential to carry Christ-like meanings in their depictions of the 'boundless distance' lit by a 'magical light' to reveal 'what is least corporeal, namely, light and air'. This concept of the painting – split between a 'bright' side with its soul-elevating aspects of Christ and Beauty, and the other dark, material side on which the painting is created – is the cynosure for reading Pym's relationship to the representative world, because it literalizes the way his engagement with systems of representation and knowledge reaches its border at a materiality that is 'dark' due to the fact that it does not include Beauty and the 'soul-elevating' powers which necessarily coincide with the 'life-giving' powers of Christ. Partially, the reason Pym is unable to comprehend the spiritual inherencies of Beauty is an epistemology that writes its own truth of absolute knowledge, particularly a pantheistically-inflected Transcendentalism.

⁶⁰⁹ Poe, *Pym*, p. 57.

Pantheism and Transcendentalism

Poe's construction of an aesthetic theory grounded largely in Neoplatonism puts him at odds with pantheistically-inflected philosophies. While pantheism shares a similarity with Neoplatonism in that both philosophies conceptualize a universe created by a beneficent God, they diverge in a significant manner for Poe: Neoplatonism asserts the existence of a World Soul and a Creator God outside and separate from the Universe, while pantheism conceives of a God that is part of, and imbues, the material world.⁶¹⁰ As a more conservative Neoplatonism, Poe's philosophy holds to the eighteenth-century idea of 'Optimism', the belief that the universe is as good as God could make it and that a divine hand shaped the heavens to mathematical perfection to create the world as the best possible expression of God's benevolence.⁶¹¹ Yet even while this Neoplatonism perceives external nature as unified and divine, it also emphasizes God's transcendence. Within such a paradigm, the universe is God's handiwork, and humankind its observer and stranger, with no intimate relationship.⁶¹² In contrast, the pantheistic worldview partially derives from the late eighteenth-century radical thought that the natural world is capable of perception, and is different from the World Soul because it is constituted by an infinity of sensations.⁶¹³ Although such philosophy is quasi-scientific, it has an attraction that presides in its religious and political deductions that read an evolutionary purposiveness in nature in its belief that the world is imperfect, but perfectible, and that its goodness is evolving towards a future fullness.⁶¹⁴ The main philosophical divergence, then, between Neoplatonism and pantheism is between a World of inanimate objects, however much imbued with a World Soul, and a living Nature endued with sensation and communication.⁶¹⁵

Nineteenth-century pantheism also puts mind and matter on one plane, where, from the poet's point of view, they are capable of an intimate relationship, asserting that God exists within the world and that He can be found and understood through an imaginative experience.⁶¹⁶

⁶¹⁰ H.W. Piper, *The Active Universe: Pantheism and the Concept of Imagination in the English Romantic Poets* (London: The Athlone Press, 1962), p. 4.

⁶¹¹ Piper, p. 8.

⁶¹² Piper, p. 10-11.

⁶¹³ Piper, p. 6.

⁶¹⁴ Piper, p. 8.

⁶¹⁵ Piper, p. 5.

⁶¹⁶ Piper, pp. 10, 3.

‘Imagination’, within the Romantic poetic expression, is the mental faculty by which the mind apprehends a world of matter that can be organized along the lines of the ‘real’ world, which impresses on the mind with its primary ‘real’ characteristics of an object’s extension and mass, and the ‘secondary’, ‘subjective’ qualities of an object’s colour, scent, and the like.⁶¹⁷ The Imagination delights in contemplating Ideas when the object that produces them is absent, and enlarges, varies and compounds them at pleasure.⁶¹⁸ Imagination also has the added meaning as the power operative in humankind’s experience of the external world, enabling one to recognize the sensibility, purpose, and the significance of natural objects.⁶¹⁹ This definition of the Imagination’s function can be traced to Diderot’s *Encyclopédie*:

I ask if the universe, or the whole collection of feeling and thinking molecules, forms a whole or not. If he replies that it does not, he shakes with that word the foundations of belief in the existence of God, by introducing disorder into nature. . . . If he agrees that it is a whole . . . he must admit that in consequence of this universal amalgamation, the world, like a huge animal, has a soul; and that, as the world may be infinite, this soul of the world, I do not say is, but may be an infinite system of perceptions, and the world may be God.⁶²⁰

This theory of the world soul as a system of individual sensibilities conceives of Nature as bipartite: it makes the universe material, and, since matter has qualities of the spirit, it also makes it spiritual, with changes in emphasis enabling it to be seen as one or the other.⁶²¹ It also shows how the universe takes a providential interest in humankind, reading evolution not just as an adjustment to environment, but as a development of the spirit within Nature towards perfection.⁶²²

Poe mentions pantheism directly in ‘Morella’, in the eponymous character’s study of ‘theological morality’, which includes the ‘wild Pantheism of Fichte; the modified [reincarnation] of the Pythagoreans; and, above all, the doctrines of *Identity* as urged by

⁶¹⁷ Piper, p. 12.

⁶¹⁸ Piper, p. 13.

⁶¹⁹ Piper, pp. 15-16.

⁶²⁰ Diderot in Piper, p. 20.

⁶²¹ Piper, p. 21.

⁶²² Piper, pp. 22-23.

Schelling'.⁶²³ Morella's physical reincarnation rhetorically undermines the pantheistic idea of a spirit bound up in the physical world, and the epigram to the tale, a quote from the *Symposium* via H.N. Coleridge, 'Itself, by itself, solely, ONE, everlastingly and single', implies an Ideality debased into a physical form.⁶²⁴ Poe's reference of Fichte and Schelling gestures to Thomas Carlyle's 'State of German Literature' essay, which discusses both pantheistic philosophers. Poe's dislike of Carlyle is well-documented. As Pollin points out, Poe makes more than twenty references to Carlyle in his work, all of them disparaging.⁶²⁵ Yet although Poe's jabs are often aimed at Carlyle's supposed 'obscurity', 'shallowness', and 'confusion', his broadsides are not just against Carlyle solely.⁶²⁶ As Richard Fusco points out, Poe 'lumped Carlyle's ideas with American Transcendentalism without systematically studying (or even considering) their differences'.⁶²⁷ We can trace the ideas that Poe took exception to first by looking at Carlyle's essay and then Emersonian thought.

When Carlyle discusses Fichte and Schelling, he does so in the context of laying down an epistemological border between the experiential and invisible, or 'the boundary between true Science and this Land of Chimeras'.⁶²⁸ For Carlyle, the field of human investigation is divided into an examination of the visible, meaning all that is seen by the 'bodily eye' and represented as a shape in the 'mind's eye', and the invisible, or what cannot be seen by the human or mind's eye, including what cannot even be pictured, imagined, or represented. Carlyle clearly associates the invisible with the spiritual, requesting the reader 'to consider seriously and deeply within himself what he means simply by these two words, GOD and his SOUL; and whether he finds that visible shape and true existence are here also the same'.⁶²⁹ Against this demarcation, are methodologies that emphasize empiricism, and those that encompass completion, or wholeness – meaning investigative methods that encompass spirituality within materiality. Carlyle extols 'the Transcendental Philosophers, Kant, Fichte, and Schelling' for recognizing the extra-

⁶²³ Edgar Allan Poe, 'Morella', in *The Portable Edgar Allan Poe*, ed. by J. Gerald Kennedy (London: Penguin, 2006), pp. 105-110 (p. 106), J. Gerald Kennedy, Note to 'Morella', in *The Portable Edgar Allan Poe*, ed. by J. Gerald Kennedy (London: Penguin, 2006), p. 613. (p. 613).

⁶²⁴ Poe, 'Morella', p. 105.

⁶²⁵ Pollin in Richard Fusco, 'Carlyle in the Belfry: Poe's Gothic Polemic in Fiction', *Carlyle Studies Annual*, 19 (1999), 49-61 (p. 49).

⁶²⁶ Poe in 'Edgar Allan Poe on Thomas Carlyle', in *Thomas Carlyle: The Critical Heritage*, ed. by Jules Paul Seigel (London: Routledge and Paul, 1971), pp. 302-303 (p. 302).

⁶²⁷ Fusco, p. 56.

⁶²⁸ Thomas Carlyle, 'State of German Literature', *Edinburgh Review*, 46 (1827), 304-351 (p. 339).

⁶²⁹ Carlyle, p. 339.

empirical spirituality within both the exterior and interior worlds.⁶³⁰ He particularly places Kantian epistemology ‘in direct contradiction to Locke’, defining it as one that ‘commences from within, and proceeds outward’, as opposed to the Locke’s methodology, which commences from ‘without’ and endeavours to ‘proceed inwards’.⁶³¹ While these are inverse philosophies, their end results are the same: to find an ‘indubitable principle’, or the ‘necessarily, absolutely, and eternally True’; that is, to locate the existence of God: ‘God *is*, nay alone *is*, for with like emphasis we cannot say that anything else is.’⁶³² This is the Absolute, the Primitively True, which the philosopher seeks’.⁶³³ However, while Lockean philosophy attempts to ‘prove the existence of God, Virtue’, and the ‘immaterial Soul’ through inferences drawn from ‘the world of sense’, Kant finds his proof ‘written as the beginning of all Philosophy, in obscured but in ineffaceable characters within our inmost being’. Attempting to prove God’s existence through logical argument, ‘a Kantist might say, would be like taking out a candle to look for the sun; nay, gaze steadily into your candle-light, and the sun himself may be invisible’.⁶³⁴ By opening the ‘inward eye to the sight of the Primitively True’, Kantian philosophy clears off ‘the obscurations of sense, which eclipse this Truth within us’.⁶³⁵

This same rejection of Lockean epistemology is seen in the writings of Emerson, whose dismissal of Locke is part of a larger dismissal of Unitarianism, which holds to a ‘benevolent, if distant, god, a demonstrable, rational world, and the possibility of moral perfection – all validated by a thriving materialistic culture’.⁶³⁶ The Unitarian perspective was defined by many other philosophies that perceived human thought as dependent on the external world, such as British empiricism, and especially Scottish Common Sense. Principally, though, it was John Locke’s theory of the *tabula rasa*, in which consciousness is shaped by external experience, which had the greatest influence on Unitarian theology.⁶³⁷ In the 1830s the younger generation of Unitarians, including Emerson, rebelled against the certitude of empirical philosophy and

⁶³⁰ Carlyle, p. 341.

⁶³¹ Carlyle, p. 346.

⁶³² Carlyle, p. 346.

⁶³³ Carlyle, pp. 346-347.

⁶³⁴ Carlyle, p. 347.

⁶³⁵ Carlyle, p. 348.

⁶³⁶ Kenneth S. Sacks, *Understanding Emerson: “The American Scholar” and His Struggle for Self-Reliance*, (Princeton: Princeton UP, 2003), p. 8.

⁶³⁷ Ibid.

espoused instead a Kantian-inflected romantic idealism that favoured 'individual instinct, self-knowledge, and a belief in transcendent, eternal ideas'.⁶³⁸

The more spiritual underpinnings of Kant's works were brought home to the Transcendentalists group by way of Samuel Taylor Coleridge's 1825 work *Aids to Reflection*. With a slightly misleading simplification, Coleridge divided Kant's theory of human cognition into a dichotomy between Reason and Understanding. For Coleridge, Reason is common to all humanity and includes inherent moral faculties as well as intuition, while Understanding evaluates the material world but, unlike Reason, varies among individuals; and due to the fact that one can 'never be certain of transient external perceptions, the innate and eternal moral sentiments provided by Reason transcend (hence: Transcendentalism) what we learn through Understanding'.⁶³⁹ Emerson acknowledged an understanding derived from experiencing external phenomenon, but believed that the more important and lasting truths were intuitive and internal. In his 'poetic appeals for humankind restored to nature and instinct' Emerson sought to affirm Romantic ideals obviated by enlightened philosophies.⁶⁴⁰

Emerson's pantheistic engagement with the natural world through the imagination can be seen in *Nature*, in which he lays out his concept of the divided self when he observes that 'all that is separate from us, all which Philosophy distinguishes as the NOT ME, that is, both nature and art, all other men and my own body, must be ranked under this name, NATURE'. A few sentences later, though, Emerson defines the same term very differently: 'Nature, in the common sense, refers to essences unchanged by man; space, the air, the river, the leaf'. This dipartite concept of nature is paradoxical: figured initially as the 'NOT ME', nature is implicitly subordinate to the self; however, as 'essences unchanged by man', the second definition reverses the values of the first and positions the self as alienated and inessential to nature.⁶⁴¹ Within Emerson's concept of nature, the self is divided because its body is defined as 'NOT ME'.

The division of the Emersonian self is emphasized when considering its position as nature's reciprocal; and this idea of an inter-relation between inner self and external nature perpetuates a Puritan theology that Emerson inherits and endorses. As Evan Carton explains, the Puritans believed in contradictory concepts of nature and the self. While they extolled Nature as

⁶³⁸ Sacks, p. 8.

⁶³⁹ Sacks, p. 9.

⁶⁴⁰ Sacks, p. 16-17.

⁶⁴¹ Emerson in Evan Carton, *The Rhetoric of American Romance: Dialectic and Identity in Emerson, Dickinson, Poe, and Hawthorne*, (London: The Johns Hopkins UP, 1985), p. 26.

God's grand creation, they also perceived it as representative of man's fallen state, both within the self, as sin, and without, as forests, Indians, famine, etc. However, in a less negative light, individual, specific 'signs' and experiences of Nature could also relate to the self because of their potential to emblemize 'an ongoing spiritual history' and assume value 'when converted or translated into knowledge of it'.⁶⁴² This conversion of Nature into spiritual emblem underscores the Puritans' paradoxical perception of identity. As Sacvan Bercovitch outlines, 'every believer had to find his own way to God, but his success depended on his capacity, by grace, to purge his inherent discrete identity and transform himself into an *exemplum fidei*, a christic emblem of the faith'.⁶⁴³ In other words, Puritanism asserted the sovereignty of the individual and endorsed spiritual self-realization, but defined individuality as the potential to achieve salvation through a self-annihilating process in which the self was transformed into a living, emblematic metaphor. Inevitably, though, the very act and artistry of interpreting emblems implied a subjective element of doubt that undermined hard-won spiritual truths and revelations, and for this reason, Puritan theocrats strictly controlled interpretive acts and encouraged mistrust of any 'unauthorized literary activity', or words that 'fail[ed] to serve, or appear to serve, The Word'.⁶⁴⁴

The Puritans' idea of nature as the 'resistant but convertible materials of experience' persisted for Emerson, who sought an interpretive project that could reunify the divided self, and not just classify its fragments, through an ego-relinquishment that would reintegrate the self with a Universal spirituality.⁶⁴⁵ The project of self-cohesion that Emerson conceptualized relies on his two notions of *art* and *originality*: like nature, art is also defined dichotomously, grouped, on one hand, with the body as artificial, negative, and separate from the self, and, on the other, as the means by which man grabs hold of the essential when it is 'applied to the mixture of will with nature'. Art is an entity detached from the self, but it is also an intimate process by which the individual can approach the communal spirit of nature.⁶⁴⁶ Essential to art's commingling with nature is the idea of originality, characterized by novelty, and manifested in 'a poetry and philosophy of insight' and 'action proportioned to nature'. As Carton points out, Emersonian originality is 'synonymous with creative self-assertion', and much of *Nature* illustrates how an

⁶⁴² Carton, p. 27.

⁶⁴³ Bercovitch in Carton, p. 27.

⁶⁴⁴ Carton, p. 27.

⁶⁴⁵ Carton, p. 32.

⁶⁴⁶ Carton, p. 26.

‘original relationship with the universe’, requires an artistic act of imagination and imposition of the will on nature.⁶⁴⁷

However, a second sense of the self’s relation to nature undermines the idea of originality when Emerson notes that the world ‘differs from the body in one important respect. It is not, like that, now subjected to the human will. Its serene order is inviolable to us. It is, therefore, to us, the present expositor of the divine mind. It is a fixed point whereby we may measure our departure’. In this second sense, the world is impervious to human will, and instead of serving as man’s double, marks a ‘fixed point’ from which he has departed.⁶⁴⁸ Man can only re-approach originality and the divine mind writ large in nature through self-abnegation, or by ‘purg[ing] the eyes’ so as to become a passive reader of nature’s ‘text’: ‘by degrees we may come to know the primitive sense of the permanent objects of nature, so that the world shall be to us an open book, and every form significant of its hidden life and final cause’.⁶⁴⁹ As Carton asserts, ‘self-assertion is self-departure, self-annihilation is self-recovery’, and when man is divorced from nature an attitude of passivity enables the ‘open book’ of nature to be understood ‘by degrees’.⁶⁵⁰ This attitude of passivity and ego-loss required to understand the ‘text’ of the world is instantiated in Emerson’s image of the transparent eyeball:

In the woods, we return to reason and faith. There is nothing that can befall me in life – no disgrace, no calamity (leaving me my eyes,) which nature cannot repair. Standing on the bare ground, -- my head bathed by the blithe air, and uplifted into infinite space, – all mean egotism vanishes. I become a transparent eye-ball. I am nothing. I see all. The currents of the Universal Being circulate through me; I am part or particle of God.⁶⁵¹

Here, the reciprocity between self-annihilation and revelation is evinced in Emerson’s assertion ‘I am nothing. I see all’. But also of note is Emerson’s heavy emphasis on ocular methods of knowing, through the image of the ‘transparent eyeball’ and the clause of ‘leaving me my eyes’ in order to benefit from the restorative powers of nature. Looking back to Poe’s ‘The Man That Was Used Up’, we see how Emerson’s ocular methods of knowing find a physically bound

⁶⁴⁷ Carton, p. 30.

⁶⁴⁸ Carton, p. 31.

⁶⁴⁹ Emerson in Carton, p. 32.

⁶⁵⁰ Carton, p. 32.

⁶⁵¹ Emerson, p. 10.

parallel in the narrator's final encounter with John A.B.C. Smith. The scene in Smith's bedroom is also marked by ocular tropes when the narrator exclaims 'my eye!!' and Smith responds that the 'Kickapoos are not so very slow at a gouge', as well as tropes of passivity when the narrator 'stagger[s] into an armchair' and with 'staring eyes and open mouth' awaits 'the solution of the wonder'.⁶⁵² The narrator's state of being struck dumb at witnessing the revelation of Smith's existence parodies the attitude of passive receptiveness promoted by Emerson; and this parody is furthered, when, instead of encountering a totalizing knowledge, the narrator instead confronts a 'nondescript', something which cannot be remarked upon.⁶⁵³

Another Transcendental idea that Poe debates against is Emerson's distinction in *Nature* between the 'sacred' and 'literary' teacher, the first being one who 'speaks from with, or from experience, as parties and possessors of the fact', and the second, one who speaks 'from without', 'as acquainted with the fact on the evidence of third persons'.⁶⁵⁴ The 'fact' or 'vision' that the sacred teacher claims to witness must come from without, lest it be considered a delusion; however, when the fact is communicated to others it must come from within, as the possessor's experience. This paradigm raises disturbing possibilities about the self and experience: if the sacred teacher speaks as possessor of the fact, is it possible that his attitude of reception is only a posture to disguise a self-manufactured vision?⁶⁵⁵ Such a possibility coincides with Poe's understanding of religious melancholy and monomania, particularly the idea that spiritual visions can be 'crased phantasies' projected outward 'from inward causes, as a concave glass reflects solid bodies', or partially caused by faulty epistemologies, while Carlyle's idea of finding God and the soul, as well as Absolute knowledge, in the material world gives resonance to Egaeus's mutilation of Berenice, by which he tries to locate his immortalized soul by collecting his wife's teeth.

In *Pym*, Poe's debate against pantheistic ideologies is mobilized in the depictions of Spirituality as collapsed into the physical world and made subordinate to representation, and in the self-reflexive digressions that metaphorically stand in for the construction of truth. Such digressions were characteristic of the nineteenth-century exploration narratives that *Pym* emulates, and were often written with the goal of objective knowledge accumulation and

⁶⁵² Poe, 'The Man', p. 411.

⁶⁵³ Poe, 'The Man', p. 411-412.

⁶⁵⁴ Carton, p. 33.

⁶⁵⁵ Ibid.

dissemination in order to service the rising capitalist world system.⁶⁵⁶ Yet while these exploration narratives were marketed as ‘true’ and ‘authentic’ accounts, they were sometimes cobbled from other literary sources. One case in point is Benjamin Morrell’s *Narrative of Four Voyages*, which *Pym* borrows from and references. Although the *Narrative* was actually based on Morrell’s notes and memoranda, it was ghost written by a poet and journalist named Samuel Woodworth. When Harpers hired Woodworth to turn the raw materials into a coherent narrative they asked for ‘a valuable book of four or five hundred octavo pages’, and to meet this quota, Woodworth embellished liberally and borrowed from other sources. Yet for all its inaccuracy the *Narrative* was circulated as a genuine first-hand account.⁶⁵⁷

What Poe knew about the production of Morrell’s *Narrative* is uncertain; but what can be shown is Poe’s cognizance of the discursive construction of validation. As Pym confesses in his Preface, ‘I feared I should not be able to write [. . .] a statement so minute and connected as to have the *appearance* of that truth it would really possess’; and this theme about creating the appearance of truth is developed in the novel’s digressions and nautical language, particularly in his vocabulary of stowage, ‘lying to’, and false modelling.⁶⁵⁸ As can be shown, these digressions and terms are metaphors for literary structuring, the sly use of detail, and the practice of ‘borrowing’ information, to create truth’s ‘appearance’.⁶⁵⁹

We can begin discussion of these metaphors by studying how Poe uses the term, ‘stowage’. As Pym explains, in order to prevent shifts in stowage, ‘great attention’ is paid ‘to the bulk taken in’, ‘the nature of the bulk’, and whether it be ‘full’ or ‘partial cargo’, and for most kinds of freight, ‘stowage is accomplished by means of a screw’.⁶⁶⁰ As Hutchisson points out, this description of stowage is ‘errant nonsense’: boxes, hogsheads and crates cannot be screwed in because they would break.⁶⁶¹ Yet an underlying meaning to Pym’s ‘nonsense’ can be derived by considering the historical meanings of the term, ‘screw’, which was nineteenth-century college slang for ‘an excessive, unnecessarily minute, and annoying examination of a student by

⁶⁵⁶ Terence Whalen, *Edgar Allan Poe and the Masses: The Political Economy of Literature in Antebellum America* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1999), pp. 149.

⁶⁵⁷ Whalen, p. 164.

⁶⁵⁸ Poe, *Pym*, p. 43.

⁶⁵⁹ James M. Hutchisson, ‘Poe, Hoaxing, and the “Digressions” in *Arthur Gordon Pym*’, *CEA Critic*, 58 (1996) 24-34 (p. 29).

⁶⁶⁰ Poe, *Pym*, p. 98.

⁶⁶¹ Hutchisson, p. 29.

an instructor' marked by 'stammering and stuttering – the unending doubtings and guessings'.⁶⁶² In light of this definition, the stowage 'screwed' into a narrative frame implies information garnered from other sources and cobbled together with the 'excessive', 'unnecessary' minutia of detail to create a truthful '*appearance*'. As shown in 'Marginalia CXV', Poe understands how detail builds a discourse that writes its own truth – a logic he calls 'carrying-one's-self-in-a-hand-basket'. In this passage, Poe takes to task *The Popular Record of Modern Science* for presenting his tale, 'Mesmeric Revelation', as possible based on its '*internal evidence of authenticity*', and he points out how certain narrative details are singled out as evidential:

"The Record" insists upon the truth of a story because of certain facts – because "the initials of the young men *must* be sufficient to establish their identity" – because "the nurses *must* be accessible to all sorts of inquiries" – and because the "angry excitement and various rumours which at length rendered a public statement necessary, are sufficient to show that *something* extraordinary, *must* have taken place." To be sure! The story is proved by these facts – the facts about the students, the nurses, the excitement, the credence given the tale at New York. And now all we have to do is prove these facts. Ah! *they* are proved *by the story*.⁶⁶³

This logic of self-authentication which Poe condemns is exactly what is being scrutinized in *Pym* through the 'stowage' 'screwed' into the frame, or by 'the facts' which 'prove of such a nature as to carry with them sufficient evidence of their own authenticity' that Pym mentions in his Preface.⁶⁶⁴ Such rhetorical devices that write their own truths are alluded to again in *Pym* in the nautical practice of 'lying to', the meaning of which can be gleaned through its connection to stowage of 'partial cargo'. As Pym states, a vessel 'lying to' but not 'properly modelled' can be thrown on her beam ends, and the 'tremendous force of plunges' can give a 'terrible impetus to all loose articles', making the necessity of cautious stowage obvious; however, no 'serious consequences' are felt, '*provided there be a proper stowage*'.⁶⁶⁵ Implicit in this nautical idiom is the way a narrative that creates the appearance of truth can withstand scrutiny through the proper

⁶⁶² William A. Craigie, and James R. Hulbert, eds., *Dictionary of American English*, 4 vols (Chicago: Chicago UP, 1944).

⁶⁶³ Poe, *Marginalia*, pp. 406, 408.

⁶⁶⁴ Poe, *Pym*, p. 44.

⁶⁶⁵ Poe, *Pym*, p. 99.

use of detail and borrowed information. The concept of ‘lying to’ is therefore a somewhat oppositional term to the ‘falsely modelled’ frame. As Pym explains, ‘it becomes necessary to scud vessel’ when a strong blast of wind tears ‘in pieces the sail which is employed’ to bring ‘her head to the wind’, or when, due to ‘the false modelling of the frame’, ‘this main object cannot be effected’.⁶⁶⁶ Although the idea of a ‘falsely modelled’ sailing vessel is a fabrication, because an imperfectly designed frame would not be deemed seaworthy, it makes sense in the context of Poe’s employment of nautical language as a metaphor for discourse.⁶⁶⁷ Specifically, the ‘falsely modelled’ frame suggests the improper use of a contextualizing narrative, or genre, to provide the coherence and semblance of verity to detail and borrowed discourse.

The idea of using ‘technical’ terms, such as ‘stowage’ or ‘partial cargo’, to represent the practice of borrowing discourse to create the ‘*appearance*’ of truth occurs in *The Journal of Julius Rodman* as well. Addendum to Rodman’s detailed list of the expedition’s cargo, is the ‘editors’ footnote on pemmican. Noted for holding ‘great nutriment’ ‘in little bulk’, pemmican is also described in anecdotal relation to the ‘positive experience of an American surgeon’ who witnesses ‘the digestive process through an open wound in the stomach of a patient’, and demonstrates ‘that *bulk* is, in itself, an essential in this process, and that consequently the condensation of the nutritive property of food, involves, in a great measure, a paradox’.⁶⁶⁸ The ‘great nutriment’ brought about by the ‘little bulk’ alludes to the strategy of discursive borrowing to create the semblance of truth, with selective evidence and detail, or ‘little bulk’, contributing in a ‘great’ way to ‘verity’. More importantly to an interpretation of *Pym*, though, is the connection of ‘bulk’, or constructed truth, with imagery of digestion and the stomach, a trope which also recurs throughout Pym’s narrative: one of the ring-leaders of the *Grampus* mutineers is a cook; the corpse of Hartman Rogers’s stomach is ‘swollen immensely’; a pelican is ‘excellent eating’, as is the ‘perfectly white’ bear which the sailors devour ‘with avidity’; the *biche de mer* have no ‘prominent part’ except ‘absorbing’ and ‘excretory’ ‘opposite organs’; the filberts eaten by Pym and Peters cause a ‘severe griping of the bowels’; Parker is cannibalized to stave off famine; and Too-wit devours ‘yard after yard’ of the ‘palpitating entrails of a species of unknown animal’.⁶⁶⁹ This motif’s meaning can be ascertained by recalling Plato’s idea of the

⁶⁶⁶ Poe, *Pym*, p. 109.

⁶⁶⁷ Hutchisson, p. 30.

⁶⁶⁸ Poe, *Rodman*, p. 10.

⁶⁶⁹ Poe, *Pym*, pp. 93, 111, 184-185, 202, 220, 146, 199.

three human souls, with the soul subject to the appetites of food and drink ‘tied up’ in the stomach, as though it were a ‘savage’ joined to the previous two out of necessity. Vis-à-vis this Platonic and tripartite human divinity, stomach imagery in *Pym* signals a mortal ‘earthy’ soul that foregoes immortal life and connects this soteriological status to faulty, self-validating epistemology.

The connection of ‘bulk’ – i.e. borrowed, validating discourse – with stomach imagery in *Rodman* suggests that it is the production of narrative ‘truth’ which precludes a true knowledge of divinity; and this preclusive aspect of constructed truth is displayed most tellingly when Pym is immured in the hold of the *Grampus*, buried amidst the ‘narrow and intricate windings’ of ‘lumber’.⁶⁷⁰ Pym’s burial carries imagistic similarities to Poe’s complaint in ‘Marginalia CXXVIII’:

The enormous multiplication of books in every branch of knowledge is one of the greatest evils of this age; since it presents one of the most serious obstacles to the acquisition of correct information, by throwing in the reader’s way piles of lumber, in which he must painfully grope for the scraps of useful matter peradventure dispersed.⁶⁷¹

Stowed in a crate for ‘fine earthenware’ resembling a coffin, Pym sleeps for ‘*three entire days and nights*’ and wakes up to find that he is ‘entombed’ amidst metaphors for discourse.⁶⁷²

Contrasted against Christ’s resurrection, Pym cannot rise as well with the ‘quickenings Spirit’, partly because the epistemological system that constitutes and confines him is self-validating and self-enclosed, collapsing spirituality into the world and representation. Unlike Poe’s *thoughts of thoughts*, Pym’s constituting epistemology does not ‘attempt’ to signify what ‘cannot be known’, but, rather, assumes the eventual subsumption of ‘God, Spirit, Infinity’, etc., to the acquirement of knowledge.

This subservience of divinity to representation is illustrated by Augustus’s ‘three-sided’ letter, which carries spiritual connotations as a ‘white slip’ ‘diffused’ with a ‘clear light’ throughout its ‘whole surface’, and in its elusion to specular readability: ‘barely’ ‘discerned’ when looked at ‘directly’, it only becomes ‘in some measure perceptible’ when Pym turns ‘the

⁶⁷⁰ Poe, *Pym*, p. 68.

⁶⁷¹ Poe, *Marginalia*, p. 412.

⁶⁷² Poe, *Pym*, pp. 61, 82, 70.

exterior portions of the retina towards it'.⁶⁷³ Such theological markings continue on the paper's opposite side, which is not only etched in blood, but transmits the warning, '– *blood – your life depends on lying close*'. As the 'vague syllables' of the letter fall 'into the innermost recesses' of his 'soul', Pym considers blood 'that word of all words – so rife at all times with mystery, and suffering, and terror'.⁶⁷⁴ The implied link between blood and the 'innermost' soul, and the terms, 'mystery' and 'suffering', all resonate with Christological meaning. Yet even though Pym feels the message is soul-affecting and 'trebly full of import', he remains incapable of comprehending the spiritual aspects that lie 'beyond' the representation itself.⁶⁷⁵ Pym's inability to transcend the representative world is emphasized further through the realization that the 'three-sided' letter is composed by Augustus on the back of a 'duplicate of the forged letter from Mr Ross' – that is, on the copy of a lie. This 'double-fake' is organized by the same ideas that organize Poe's theory about a representative art that only reiterates the material world without transcending it, thereby reneging on its 'divine title'. Characterized by this inability to transcend representation, the same knowledge system that constitutes Pym also presents a 'forged' divinity that necessarily renders the 'mystical' and ethereal 'nothing but a dreary and unsatisfactory blank'.⁶⁷⁶

The self-reflexivity of *Pym* that serves to point out truth's constructed nature relates to the novel's spiritual manifestations that undermine pantheism's collapse of the spiritual into the natural world. Arguably the most striking image of *Pym*, and one which has generated much critical debate, is the 'shrouded human figure, very far larger than any dweller among men', with skin 'the perfect whiteness of the snow' who stands at the end of Pym's narrative.⁶⁷⁷ The 'shrouded human figure' shares similarities with Kuhleborn, the 'tall white figure' of 'gigantic dimensions' in *Undine*; and just as Kuhleborn embodies the 'earthy' spirit, so does the white figure at the end of Pym's journey, but inflected to comply with the novel's under-riding concern with epistemology. Within Poe's novel, the white figure not only instantiates the collapse of the spiritual into the physical world, but represents the point where *Pym* itself, as an epistemological narrative, attempts to encompass divinity into its own system of knowledge, so that beyond it is nothing – or at least a 'dreary blank' on one hand, and, on the other, a spiritual realm ultimately

⁶⁷³ Poe, *Pym*, p. 73.

⁶⁷⁴ Poe, *Pym*, p. 76.

⁶⁷⁵ Poe, *Pym*, p. 76.

⁶⁷⁶ Poe, *Pym*, pp. 91, 73.

⁶⁷⁷ Poe, *Pym*, p. 239.

unknowable and unrepresentable to empirical experience. Due to this double meaning, the narrative ends with the white figure and remains ‘incomplete’; and, by implication, so too does Pym, in that he never fully gains the elevated soul through love and the Holy Spirit, or come to understand or express Beauty, and therefore never transcends representation. That is, he reports on the empirical world, but does not write the *thoughts of thoughts* that gesture to what is beyond it because he does not attain poetic sensibility. It is no coincidence that the ‘remaining chapters’ mentioned in the ‘Note’ are ‘irrecoverably lost’ in an accident in which Pym himself perishes, thereby linking the missing chapters to the ‘spirit’s outer world’, or to what is ‘entirely out of the range of human experience’; and in this sense, the ‘Note’ comments, in a concrete way, on its own epistemological frame, which pretends to encompass such spiritual knowledge into itself, but which it cannot hold in accordance with its own methodologies, so that the ‘remaining chapters’ literally remain unrepresented.⁶⁷⁸

The descriptions contextualizing the white figure’s appearance all affirm the Spirit’s physicality and subservience to observation: the ‘grey vapour’ loses its ‘greyness of tint’; a ‘gigantic curtain’ resembling a ‘limitless cataract’ rolls ‘silently into the sea from some immense and far-distant rampart in heaven’; and intermittent ‘rents’ emerge in the ‘veil’ to reveal, ‘a chaos of flitting and indistinct images’.⁶⁷⁹ In other words, the spiritual world has become a geographical place that can be explored and measured. Yet the details suggest something askew: the birds flying outwith the veil are ‘pallidly white’; the ‘sullen darkness’ ‘materially’ dims until ‘relieved only by the glare of the water thrown back from the white curtain’; the canoe travels at a ‘hideous velocity’; and the veil emits ‘no sound’.⁶⁸⁰ The negativity of these images is amplified further when compared with another canoe-ride, the narrator’s voyage through Arnheim: *there* the canoe proceeds ‘steadily’ and ‘magically’ towards the setting sun, to the ‘divinest melody’, until finally reaching the ‘glittering’ architecture ‘sustaining itself by miracle in mid-air’.⁶⁸¹ The difference between ‘Arnheim’ and *Pym*, is that the former depicts the transubstantiation of property with the Spirit through the labour of the poetic sentiment, while the latter reverses this process, debasing the Spirit so that it becomes physical; and this physicality of the Spirit is represented by the ‘white powder, resembling ashes’ which nearly

⁶⁷⁸ Poe, *Pym*, p. 85.

⁶⁷⁹ Poe, *Pym*, pp. 238-239.

⁶⁸⁰ Poe, *Pym*, pp. 238-239.

⁶⁸¹ Poe, ‘Arnheim’, pp. 614-615.

overwhelms the canoe and settles on a 'large surface of the water', so that the World Soul is worn like a shroud.

Other key figures of the novel's white colour scheme are the 'singular-looking land animal' 'covered with a straight silky hair, perfectly white', with claws and teeth of a 'brilliant scarlet', and the bear with 'perfectly white' wool and 'blood red' eyes.⁶⁸² Like the shrouded figure and inundation of whiteness at the narrative's end, the animals also represent the spirit made physical, with the 'scarlet' suggesting blood, and repeating the novel's Christ-related tropes. The Arctic bear shares another similarity with the shrouded figure, in that it recalls similar imagery from *Undine*, particularly a scene in which Huldbrand spots 'something black' in the treetops of the haunted forest which he assumes to be a 'bear', before the black creature cries out, 'If I did not gather the woods here, fool, on what would you be roasted in the coming midnight?', and scares off Huldbrand's horse before he can recognize 'what kind of devil's beast' it 'really' is.⁶⁸³ Like the creature in *Undine*, the beasts in *Pym* have 'devil-like' connotations that recall the 'prodigious uncouth shapes' associated with religious melancholy that persecute those who are led away from a union with God. While the scarlet and white colours of the animals imply their spiritual tenor, their descriptions as ferocious beasts suggest that Poe portrays the pantheistic collapse of God and the soul into the physical world as spiritually dangerous.

Another instance of 'whiteness' representing the collapse of the Spiritual world into the natural world to preclude the soul's 'elevation' occurs when Pym disguises himself as Hartmann Rogers's 'disgusting corpse, or at least his spiritual image'.⁶⁸⁴ The corpse of Rogers already bears the markings of salvation lost by the pantheistic collapse of God and soul into the physical world: after drinking poisoned 'spirits', Rogers's face shrinks and is coloured a 'chalky whiteness, except where relieved by two or three glaring red splotches'; and Pym's disguise repeats these tropes when Peters rubs white chalk on his face and stains it with blood taken from 'a cut on his finger', thereby re-emphasizing the compression of Spirituality into representation.⁶⁸⁵ As Pym states when he observes his disguise in a 'fragment of looking glass', 'I was so impressed with a sense of vague awe at the recollection of the terrific reality which I

⁶⁸² Poe, *Pym*, pp. 188-189, 185.

⁶⁸³ *Undine*, p. 41.

⁶⁸⁴ Poe, *Pym*, p. 116.

⁶⁸⁵ Poe, *Pym*, pp. 111-112.

was thus representing, that I was seized with a violent tremor'.⁶⁸⁶ Pym's statement is ironic, because he does not fully comprehend anything beyond representation, even while he supposes a Christian afterlife.

This disjuncture between Pym's belief in a Christian teleology and his immurement in a pantheistic and representational world that foregoes the soul's elevation is suggested again in the surviving crew's confrontation with the 'hermaphrodite brig'. This encounter is chronologically ordered as a response to prayer, both after the crew throw themselves 'on their knees to God' and 'implore His aid in the many dangers which beset them', and when they pour out their 'whole souls in shouts and thanksgiving to God for the complete, unexpected, and glorious deliverance' that is 'so palpably at hand' as they watch the brig's approach.⁶⁸⁷ There is a large discrepancy, though, between their 'deliverance' and the actuality of event, when crew discovers the brig is peopled by 'twenty-five or thirty human bodies', including 'several females', which 'lay scattered about between the counter and galley in the last and most loathsome state of putrefaction'.⁶⁸⁸ The theological disjuncture between Pym and the Spirit is suggested on several levels. Recalling Byles's sermon and the way the putrescent body signifies the unredeemed, Adamic soul, the hermaphrodite brig's arrival as a response to the crew's prayers suggests that the brig, with its putrescent passengers, reflects the soteriological condition of the *Grampus's* remaining crew. That Poe ties this lost salvation to a pantheistic world is suggested in the description of the brig as 'hermaphrodite'. Again, within Poe's philosophy, women are figured as agents that elevate the soul through love, with the marital union also a union between the earth and spirit. The classification of the brig as 'hermaphrodite' implies a union between the male / flesh and female / Spirit to be an entirely physical union into one body, so that in the world of *Pym* the soul is not elevated through the Spirit; and this idea is emphasized by the 'several females' included amongst the putrescent bodies. This direct association between religion and putrefaction occurs throughout *Pym*, implying a discursively and pantheistically 'blocked' access to the elevated soul: recalling that the mid-day sun stands for Christ come in Judgement, Augustus dies at 'twelve o'clock' and becomes a 'mass of putrefaction'; Rogers dies at 'about eleven in the forenoon'; Pym emerges from his three-day sleep to find his food in 'a state of absolute putrefaction'; and coincident with Augustus's decay is the putrefaction of the crew's

⁶⁸⁶ Poe, *Pym*, p. 113.

⁶⁸⁷ Poe, *Pym*, pp. 129, 131.

⁶⁸⁸ Poe, *Pym*, p. 132.

water, with water being the Platonic bridge between the earth and divinity, which becomes a 'putrid' and 'thick gelatinous mass; nothing but frightful-looking worms mingled with slime'. Indeed, immediately after witnessing the deceased crew of the hermaphrodite brig the crew cannot 'help shouting to the dead for help', begging 'long and loudly' to 'those silent and disgusting images' to 'stay' and 'not abandon' them, so that prayers to God are immediately transformed into prayers to the putrescent dead.⁶⁸⁹

Tropes of Property in Pym

Within this theological and epistemological context is Pym's unfulfilled individuation quest from an identity constituted by property to one constituted by a soteriological union between the flesh and Spirit. The theme of property is apparent in the first sentence of the narrative. As Whalen points out, *pym*, or 'pim', is a form of currency mentioned in the Bible, so the opening declaration, 'My name is Arthur Gordon Pym', is a statement about subjectivity defined by commercial property.⁶⁹⁰ Pym's constitution by property is further given by the fact that his father is a 'respectable trader in sea stores', and his 'maternal grandfather' owns a 'tolerable sum of money' from speculations 'in stocks of the Edgarton New-Bank', which Pym expects 'to inherit' at 'his death'.⁶⁹¹ Pym's break from his grandfather becomes the initial step of his journey away from property: his grandfather threatens to cut off Pym 'with a shilling' when he discovers Pym's plans to travel, and Pym last sees his grandfather just before he stows away on the *Grampus*.⁶⁹² With Pym's departure from his grandfather an economy of loss and salvation begins and recurs throughout the narrative. In the hold of the *Grampus*, Pym inventories his property then loses it either to putrescence or Tiger's appetite. Seeing his coffin-like apartment for the first time, Pym lists its contents of 'some books, pen, ink and paper, three blankets, a large jug full of water, a keg of sea biscuits, three or four immense Bologna sausages, an enormous ham, a cold leg of roast mutton, and half a dozen bottles of cordials and liqueurs'; then, with sentiments reminiscent of *Robinson Crusoe*, he 'proceed[s] to take possession of [his] little apartment' with 'feelings of higher satisfaction' than 'any monarch ever experienced upon

⁶⁸⁹ Poe, *Pym*, pp. 155, 111, 64, 155, 132.

⁶⁹⁰ Whalen, p. 173, 47.

⁶⁹¹ Poe, *Pym*, p. 47.

⁶⁹² Poe, *Pym*, pp. 58, 59.

entering a new palace'.⁶⁹³ The duration of Pym's immurement coincides with his gradual loss of property: he discovers his water jug empty, Tiger devours the 'remnant of mutton', his matches are in 'fragments', his taperwax is 'mumbled by the dog', he drinks all his cordials, he loses his 'morsel of hamskin'.⁶⁹⁴ At last, with his 'whole stock of provisions' 'reduced to a single gill of liqueur', Pym drains the bottle 'to the last drop', and dashes 'it furiously to the floor'. As the echo dies away Pym hears Augustus calling his name, and his salvation is secure as his last item of property, the carving knife, drops and rattles against the floor.⁶⁹⁵

This same economy occurs on the wreck of the *Grampus*, after the crew cuts into the storeroom with the axe to gain more property and begin their inventory anew, with the jar of olives, 'large ham', 'bottle of Madeira wine', 'four more small jars of olives, another ham, a carboy containing nearly three gallons of excellent cape Madeira wine', 'a small tortoise of the Gallipago breed', in addition to rainwater stored in a jug.⁶⁹⁶ Following this point, the crew loses their property again: the ham and two jars of olives are washed overboard despite 'careful' storage, and the tortoise has less meat than anticipated.⁶⁹⁷ Finally, their 'whole stock of provisions' is lost as the hull overturns. Immediately afterwards, Pym and Peters discover the 'nutritious' barnacles and are rescued by the *Jane Guy*.⁶⁹⁸

By establishing a link between lost property and salvation in *Pym*, Poe restates his religious idea that property alone cannot be the constituting element for the self, and in fact obstructs the soul's progress; rather, the soul elevated through Judeo-Christian salvation must be the foundation of the self, with the investment of the self's divine principle into the land being the 'greatest advantage' toward fulfilling the 'purposes for which the Deity had implanted the poetic sentiment in man'. Yet although Poe prescribes this theological perspective, he also emphasizes how the soul's elevation through the Spirit is precluded in *Pym*'s pantheistic teleology. One of the novel's prominent scenes that emphasizes this Spiritual loss is Parker's immolation, which is presented as analogous to the Crucifixion and Communion but without the theological idea of the Holy Spirit. The way Parker suffers 'with great patience, making no complaint, and endeavouring to inspire' the crew 'with hope in every manner he could devise',

⁶⁹³ Poe, *Pym*, p. 62.

⁶⁹⁴ Poe, *Pym*, pp. 67, 72, 77, 78.

⁶⁹⁵ Poe, *Pym*, pp. 78-79.

⁶⁹⁶ Poe, *Pym*, pp. 146-148.

⁶⁹⁷ Poe, *Pym*, pp. 153-154.

⁶⁹⁸ Poe, *Pym*, pp. 157-161.

and the way he makes ‘no resistance whatever’ at the ‘consummation of the tragedy of his death’, lend Parker Christ-like attributes.⁶⁹⁹ A Eucharistic analogy follows Parker’s death when the crew appeases its ‘raging thirst’ with the ‘blood of the victim’, and devours ‘the rest of the body’. Yet simultaneously, Parker’s cannibalization is also a ‘fearful repast’ beyond the power of words ‘to impress the mind with the exquisite horror of’ its ‘reality’, suggesting a Burkean sublimity grounded in terror and not the awe of confronting God.⁷⁰⁰ Further emphasizing the lost ‘soul-elevating’ aspects of Parker’s death is the way it is tied to representations of Spirituality collapsed into the natural world, such as the shrouded figure or white animals, when the seagull from the hermaphrodite brig alights from ‘the body upon which it had been feasting’ and drops the ‘horrid morsel’ of human flesh ‘immediately at the feet of Parker’, foreshadowing his destruction.⁷⁰¹

While Parker’s ‘Spirit-less’ sacrifice brings into relief the theological reasons why Pym’s quest to reach a union with God fails, it also points out what Poe sees as a failure in America’s quest for land; namely, that it does not involve the investment of the land with the poetic sentiment, which, again, is related to Beauty, Christ, and the Spirit. The connections between Pym’s quest and America’s quest for property is made in his dream about a fecund territory gained through conquest, and of industry, in which he sees ‘pleasing images’ of ‘green trees, waving meadows of ripe grain, processions of dancing girls, troops of cavalry, and other phantasies’, and the ‘predominant idea’ of ‘*motion*’, which passes before his ‘mind’s eye’ in an ‘endless succession’ of ‘windmills, ships, large birds, balloons, people on horseback, carriages driving furiously, and similar moving objects’.⁷⁰² This same connection is drawn as well when Pym reads the *History of Lewis and Clark* before he falls asleep in the hold of the *Grampus*, and it is also seen in the several narrative digressions following Pym’s rescue by the *Jane Guy*.⁷⁰³ With Pym’s two halves thematically mirroring one another, the second half reflects the notion of the foregone Spiritual and soul-elevating principle, but more particularly in regards to the national transformation of territory into property. Pym’s description of Kerguelen Island metaphorically illustrates the ‘emptiness’ of land without the investment of the poetic sentiment when he tells how an early explorer originally mistook the island for ‘a portion of an extensive

⁶⁹⁹ Poe, *Pym*, pp. 139, 146.

⁷⁰⁰ Poe, *Pym*, p. 146.

⁷⁰¹ Poe, *Pym*, p. 133.

⁷⁰² Poe, *Pym*, p. 124.

⁷⁰³ Poe, *Pym*, p. 63.

southern continent', as well as when Pym explains how upon 'approaching the land', 'the navigator might be induced to suppose' that the sides of its hills 'are clothed with brilliant verdure', when in fact this 'deceitful appearance is caused by a small plant resembling saxifrage' growing on a 'species of crumbling moss', and that there is scarcely any other 'vegetation on the island'.⁷⁰⁴ In other words, the land only offers the appearance of completion, fecundity, and production, but is actually an empty signifier.

A similar theme of emptiness structures the description of Tristan d'Acunha Island as well. Again literalizing the pantheistic conflation of the natural with spiritual worlds, Poe draws the island's geography as reaching up to heaven in a physical sense with the island rising 'more than a thousand feet perpendicularly from the sea' to create a tableland, from which a 'lofty cone' rises, which is 'barren' and 'covered in snow', thereby symbolizing the land's spiritual barrenness.⁷⁰⁵ Connecting the island's spiritual 'barrenness' to the American quest for property is the island's history, which is marked by American annexation of the land for commercial gain. As Pym explains, Captain Patten, of the *Industry*, arrived on the island in 1790 for seven months to collect an abundance of sealskins. He was followed by Captain Colqhoun of the American brig, *Betsey*, who plants 'onions, potatoes, cabbages', and other produce, and then Captain Heywood in 1811, who discovered three Americans 'residing upon the island to prepare sealskins and oil', one of whom called himself 'the sovereign of the country', and asserted he 'had cleared and cultivated about sixty acres of land, and turned his attention to raising the coffee plant and sugar cane, with which he had been furnished by the American minister in Rio Janeiro'.⁷⁰⁶ An analogy between the island and America is again drawn when the American settlement is abandoned in 1817 and 'taken possession of' by English families who take up 'residence there independently of the government'; and again reiterating how the land is not invested with the national root, the 'supreme governor' of the independent colony is an 'Englishman of the name Glass', whose name suggests he is cipher-like and without a divinely placed principle.⁷⁰⁷

Allegories about private property and citizenship are also drawn in relation to the missing poetic sentiment in the description of the penguin rookery. Described as having a 'very striking'

⁷⁰⁴ Poe, *Pym*, p. 165.

⁷⁰⁵ Poe, *Pym*, p. 171.

⁷⁰⁶ Poe, *Pym*, p. 172.

⁷⁰⁷ Poe, *Pym*, p. 173.

‘resemblance to a human figure’, and ‘plumage’ in the colour of ‘two broad stripes of gold colour’, the ‘royal penguin’ is metaphoric for humanity constituted by property.⁷⁰⁸ The creation of property through labour, and the blocked access to divinity are suggested by the construction of the rookery and the penguins’ ‘singular friendship’ with the albatrosses. In Pym’s description of the rookery’s construction, the ‘birds assemble in vast numbers’ then ‘proceed, with one accord’, ‘to trace out, with mathematical accuracy, either a square or parallelogram’ that accommodates ‘all the birds assembled’. Once inside the square, the birds clear it of ‘every species of rubbish’ and partition ‘the whole area into small squares exactly equal in size’ by ‘forming narrow paths’ that cross ‘each other at right angles throughout’ the rookery. At each intersection an albatross constructs a nest by ‘erecting a hillock about a foot high’ made from ‘earth, seaweed, and shells’, while the penguin constructs a nest in the centre of the square by digging a ‘hole in the earth, very shallow’.⁷⁰⁹ Due to the ‘thievish propensities prevalent in the rookery’, or ‘colony’, the inhabitants never leave an egg unattended. While the main population of the rookery consists of penguins and albatrosses, it also includes a ‘variety of oceanic birds’ that enjoy ‘all the privileges of citizenship’.⁷¹⁰ In calling the rookery a ‘colony’, Poe makes an analogy between the penguin ‘society’ and America, focusing particularly on the investment of nature with labour to create property. Recalling that the colour white represents the pantheistic conflation of the Spirituality into nature, the fact that the ‘whole atmosphere just above the settlement’ is ‘darkened with the immense number of albatrosses’, suggests that the penguin rookery, and American society, are unable to form a Spiritual union with God.

Pym’s search to locate an identity constituted by divinity as opposed to just property is caught up with the *Jane Guy*’s search to find the ‘Aurora Islands’.⁷¹¹ With some boats never ‘finding them’ and others declaring ‘positively that they have seen them, and even been close to their shores’, the Aurora Islands’ intermittent physicality implies ethereality and metaphorically represents the national religious ‘root’. The fact that neither the *Jane Guy*, nor the specifically ‘American’ schooners *Henry* and *Wasp*, can find the Auroras reiterates how the national ‘root’ is missing from the American nation and replaced by property.⁷¹² This substitution is implied by the fact that the *Jane Guy*’s inability to find the Auroras directly leads to the discovery of Tsalal,

⁷⁰⁸ Poe, *Pym*, p. 166.

⁷⁰⁹ Poe, *Pym*, p. 167-168.

⁷¹⁰ Poe, *Pym*, p. 169.

⁷¹¹ Poe, *Pym*, p. 173.

⁷¹² Poe, *Pym*, pp. 174-175.

because after failing to locate the Aurora Islands Captain Guy searches out ‘Glass’s Islands’ and then decides to ‘push toward the pole’.⁷¹³ This link between the missing Auroras and Tsalal implies that the national ‘root’ is forsaken in the colonial moment of the *Jane Guy*’s encounter with the Tsalalians. Again, for Poe, a naturalized national ownership of the soil is contingent on the artistic investment of the land with the poetic sentiment through labour, and not necessarily conquest or exploitation, the reason being that such an investment necessarily requires an essentiality of the self, and acquires a bond with the national territory that realigns the land with the ‘Deity’s purpose’, or an Edenic state. In contrast, the lack of this divine labour contributes to an ‘artificial’ subjectivity and nationhood. As presented in ‘The Man That Was Used Up’, the inability to invest the land with a divinely placed principle is indicative of the soul’s mortal and ‘un-elevated’ state, or a foregone union with God through the Spirit, so that such a preclusion also means the lost inspiration from ideals such as charity. A society built on this preclusion thereby foregoes the idea of the ‘city on the hill’ as laid out in Winthrop’s ‘A Model of Christian Charity’, and establishes instead a ‘degraded Babylon’. Yet at the same time Poe criticizes colonial exploitation he also presents aboriginal tribes as irrational, with ‘un-elevated’ souls themselves, so that they too cannot form an essential bond with the soil. This conflict between the colonizer and colonized, in which both groups are lacking essentiality to invest into the land, is portrayed in the *Jane Guy*’s encounter with Tsalal.

Tsalal

The colonial desire to transform a newly discovered country into property is acted on at the outset of the *Jane Guy*’s arrival to Tsalal, when Captain Guy sights a Tsalalian eating *biche de mer* in ‘its natural state’ and calls for ‘a thorough investigation of the country, in the hope of making a profitable speculation of discovery’.⁷¹⁴ Further enacting the Lockean transformation of nature into property, the crew then begins ‘laying off the proper grounds, erecting a portion of the buildings, and doing some other work’ in order to harvest the *biche de mer*.⁷¹⁵ Yet while the *Jane Guy*’s crew invests the land with property through labour, their exploitive and militaristic relationship with the Tsalalians implies that they lack the ‘elevated souls’ and associated traits of

⁷¹³ Poe, *Pym*, p. 176.

⁷¹⁴ Poe, *Pym*, p. 192.

⁷¹⁵ Poe, *Pym*, p. 204.

charity. A dramatic irony inflects Pym's tone when he describes as 'perfectly satisfactory to both parties' an unequal arrangement wherein the Tsalalians gather *biche de mer* under the superintendence of three crew members to receive 'a stipulated quantity of blue beads, knives, red cloth' while Captain Guy takes 'advantage of the fine weather to prosecute his voyage to the southward'.⁷¹⁶ The same dramatic irony and lack of charity is portrayed when the *Jane Guy*'s crew establishes 'a regular market on shore, just under the guns of the schooner', where bartering is 'carried on with every appearance of good faith'; and again when Pym asserts the crew 'entertained not the slightest suspicion' of the Tsalalians' possible treachery, although they arm themselves 'to the teeth' before travelling inland, and prepare the *Jane Guy* with 'boarding nettings', 'double-shotted' guns, 'swivels loaded with canisters of musket balls', and anchor her a mile off shore so 'no canoe could approach her in any direction without being distinctly seen and exposed to the full fire of' her 'swivels'.⁷¹⁷

The ultimate fate of the *Jane Guy*'s crew indicates their 'artificial' claim to the land, and shows Poe's pejorative attitude toward colonial military campaigns to establish property. Buried under 'more than a million tons of earth and stone', the crew is metaphorically incapable of rising above an 'earthy' spiritual state.⁷¹⁸ As well, just as Crusoe and Friday bury the cannibals' 'barbarous feast', the Tsalalians bury any trace that their right to the land is contested; and their assurance of ownership through burial is matched by the disarticulation of colonizing bodies when the *Jane Guy*'s remaining crew is 'borne down at once, overwhelmed, trodden under foot, and absolutely torn to pieces in an instant'.⁷¹⁹ The attempt by Captain Guy's crew to militarily subdue Tsalal, and the emphatic meaning attached to the importance of arms, also exposes their 'artificiality' of self. While on board the *Jane Guy*, the Tsalalians believe the crew's weapons to be 'idols' judging by the 'care' the crew has 'of them' and the 'attention' with which the crew watches the 'movements' of the Tsalalians while the weapons are in their possession.⁷²⁰ The religious connotations attributed to the guns suggest that they replace a true religious 'root'. A similar implication is drawn in *Rodman* as well, when Rodman fires on the Sioux after they refer to his canon as a 'big green grasshopper'. Implicit in Rodman's act of violence is a validation of the canon's meaning; that is, he affirms what he perceives is an essentiality of the self, even

⁷¹⁶ Poe, *Pym*, p. 202.

⁷¹⁷ Poe, *Pym*, pp. 201, 205.

⁷¹⁸ Poe, *Pym*, p. 211.

⁷¹⁹ Poe, *Pym*, p. 215.

⁷²⁰ Poe, *Pym*, p. 191.

though the canon is a material, as opposed to Spiritual or 'poetic', justification to claim the land; and this false sense of essentiality is underscored in *Pym* when the muskets and cutlasses become 'lost among the loose earth at the bottom of the chasm'.⁷²¹

Contrasting the way Captain Guy's crew creates property by mixing their labour with nature, the Tsalalians cannot create property at all. While the crew sets 'about to work in good earnest' the task of felling trees, the Tsalalians stand in 'great astonishment'; and while Pym provides a detailed list of *biche de mer* prices in Canton down to the eighth degree of quality, the Tsalalians offer 'their commodities frequently without a price'.⁷²² This inability to establish property is further apparent in the state of their village, which is made up of dwellings of 'the most miserable description imaginable', 'unlike those even of the lowest of the savage races with which mankind are acquainted': some shelters consist of a felled tree with 'a large black skin thrown over it', while others are built with rough limbs reclined against a bank of clay; still others are 'mere holes dug in the earth' and covered over with branches, and the majority are 'small shallow caverns' scratched in the ledge of dark stone 'resembling fuller's earth'.⁷²³ Basically, the Tsalalians are creatures of the earth, or 'of the earth, earthy', without the divinely placed soul to invest into nature.

In fact, everything about Tsalal embodies a lost divinity: the 'formidable serpents' that infer Adam's fall from Eden; the way the pelicans, white symbols of spirituality, never travel to the 'dwellings of the savages'; the water that forms 'distinct veins' and does not 'commingle', suggesting that there is no bridge between the earth and the Spirit; and the reiteration of this trope in relation to the earth, with is marked by a 'singular stratification'.⁷²⁴ The lacking divinity is implicit as well in the black, white, and red colour scheme woven through the novel and highlighted in the Tsalal episodes. When Pym originally sights the hermaphrodite brig, he mistakes the dead sailor to be a man with 'very dark skin' and 'the most brilliantly white teeth' nodding in a 'rather odd way', and later realizes that the sailor is a corpse resting on a rope, being 'swayed to and fro by the exertions of the carnivorous' seagull, and it is this motion that originally impresses the crew with the belief that the dead man is 'alive'.⁷²⁵ This image of the dead sailor emblemizes humanity in the pantheistic cosmos of *Pym*, with the white seagull, a

⁷²¹ Poe, *Pym*, p. 210.

⁷²² Poe, *Pym*, p. 204.

⁷²³ Poe, *Pym*, pp. 195-196.

⁷²⁴ Poe, *Pym*, pp. 197, 196, 194, 211.

⁷²⁵ Poe, *Pym*, pp. 131-132.

manifestation of the physical spirit, animating a man whose death and putrescence signals a precluded union with God, while the fact that the seagull removes itself from the body ‘with much apparent difficulty’ and rises above it implies that it becomes separated from the body.⁷²⁶ A connection is drawn between the dead sailor with ‘dark skin’ and the Tsalalians, with their ‘jet black’ complexion and ‘skins of an unknown black animal’, that implies a similar lack of an ethereal soul; instead, their ‘souls’ are instantiated in their physical being.⁷²⁷ In fact, the Tsalalians manifest Egaeus’s theological perspective of the soul in ‘Berenice’, in that their teeth are their souls, and the fact that they are ‘never disclosed’, suggests that their teeth are the ‘invisible’ aspects of their identities.⁷²⁸ Nu-Nu’s last act of lifting his upper lip with his forefinger to display his black teeth just before he dies is analogous to the soul’s departure from the body at death.⁷²⁹ The soteriological condition of the Tsalalians gains clarity by again recalling how women are drawn as reflections of the male souls in Poe’s writing. Although there are very few women in *Pym*, a marital union is implied by the identical surnames of Captain Guy and the *Jane Guy*. This implied ‘marriage’ suggests that the *Jane Guy* is a reflection of Captain Guy’s own soul, which itself is bound up in the worldly cares of property. Like Egaeus, the Tsalalians perceive the representations of the soul as the soul itself, as suggested when they consider the *Jane Guy* to be ‘a living creature’ and are ‘afraid of hurting it with the points of their spears’; and this idea is displayed further when the ship’s cook strikes his axe ‘into the deck, making a gash of considerable depth’ and prompts Too-wit to sympathize with the ‘sufferings of the schooner’ by ‘patting and smoothing the gash with his hand, and washing it with a bucket of sea water’.⁷³⁰ In this light, Nu-Nu’s explanation to Pym for the Tsalalians’ attack on the *Jane Guy*’s by showing his teeth points to their dislike of a spirituality existent beyond the physical self, because such a divine spirit can be invested into nature. This distrust is illustrated when Too-wit encounters the ‘two large mirrors’ on board the *Jane Guy*, ‘with his face to one and his back to the other’, and then throws ‘himself upon the floor, with his face buried in his hands’, not wishing to acknowledge the possibility of a dipartite self divided into physical and spiritual aspects; and it is also shown in their avoidance of white representations of spirituality, such as when they ‘recoil’ from the ‘complexion’ of ‘the white race’, commence a

⁷²⁶ Poe, *Pym*, p. 133.

⁷²⁷ Poe, *Pym*, p. 189.

⁷²⁸ Poe, *Pym*, p. 197.

⁷²⁹ Poe, *Pym*, p. 238.

⁷³⁰ Poe, *Pym*, pp. 190-191.

‘loud jabbering’ ‘intermingled with occasional shouts’ when they see the white handkerchief, refuse to approach the carcass of the white animal and avoid white items, like ‘the schooner’s sail, and egg, an open book, or a pan of flour’.⁷³¹

With this theological perspective in mind, the Tsalalians’ destruction of the *Jane Guy* is also the destruction of the divine ‘property’ that can be invested into the land.⁷³² Reifying the destroyed ‘divine’ principle that enables the colonial annexation of land into property are the dismembered bodies that are ‘absolutely torn to pieces in an instant’. Inversely, the Tsalalians’ destruction of the *Jane Guy* becomes their own destruction as well, when they attempt to loot ‘spoils’ from the ship and are obliterated in an explosion that fills the atmosphere with a ‘wild chaos of wood, and metal, and human limbs’, leaves many Tsalalians ‘desperately mangled’, and covers the surface of the bay with ‘the struggling and drowning wretches’.⁷³³ This connection between the Tsalalians’ gain of property and their destruction enacts an ideology that justifies the preclusion of tribal ownership of property by supposing their inherent lack of rationality, which, in turn, is also a divine lack. Fittingly, the Tsalalians are destroyed by fire, the symbol of divinity, in an image painted with Poe’s Neoplatonic symbols: smoke emerges from the decks, resembling a ‘black and heavy thundercloud’, and, ‘as if from its bowels’, a ‘tall stream of vivid fire’ rises from the lower decks to a height of ‘a quarter of a mile’.⁷³⁴ While the pillar of fire infers a scene of biblical judgement, the symbols read together tell the story of the Tsalalians’ downfall: the fire emerging from the ‘bowels’ of the ship infers a ‘savage’ soul encompassed by the corporeal appetites, and the fact that it ascends to a ‘black’ cloud, symbolizing the deathly and mortal state, again reasserts how they do not have the proper divine condition to own property.

Dirk Peters

Again, Poe’s perception of Native Americans is dipartite, even contradictory. On one hand, he presents tribal populations as inherently and essentially incapable of owning property; and this ‘inherency’ neatly invalidates their competing claims to the national soil. On the other,

⁷³¹ Poe, *Pym*, pp. 191, 190, 189, 219, 192.

⁷³² Poe, *Pym*, p. 217.

⁷³³ Poe, *Pym*, p. 216, 218.

⁷³⁴ Poe, *Pym*, p. 218.

within his own Neoplatonic theory, Poe considers indigeneity an aspect of the national 'root', and integral to an investment of the land with a poetic labour so that it can express the Beautiful. The difference between these two tangential perspectives on Native Americans is the same difference between the Tsalalians and Dirk Peters. While the Tsalalians embody the national justifications for annexing tribal lands, Peters represents America's right to the soil gained by first recognizing aboriginal claims to the land, and then incorporating aboriginal populations into the body politic. As discussed in Chapter Three, Poe attempts to locate a national Ideality that is 'indigenous' and springs from the 'country itself'. Part of the process of claiming Ideality thereby requires asserting an indigenous right to the land. One way that Poe represents America's 'indigenous' ownership is by figuring Native Americans as metonyms for the land, and then incorporating Native Americans themselves into the American self. In *Pym*, Poe draws this incorporation in two ways: through Peters's eventual displacement of Augustus as Pym's primary friend and colleague, and through Peters's own progression into rationality.

Pym's close friendship with Augustus is clearly stated. Pym often goes 'home' with Augustus to 'remain all day, and sometimes all night'. They even occupy 'the same bed'. And after recounting his 'prophecy' Pym says, 'Augustus thoroughly entered into my state of mind. It is probable, indeed, that our intimate communion had resulted in a partial interchange of character'.⁷³⁵ Basically, Pym's relationship with Augustus is presented as analogous to a marriage, with an implied spiritual union, so that Augustus reflects the state of Pym's soul and its capacity to achieve soteriological completion. As the reflection of Pym's soul, though, Augustus also represents what Pym needs to evolve from; that is, an identity defined by commercial property and not a religious 'root'. The spiritual connection between Pym and Augustus is suggested just before the mad 'freak' on the *Ariel*, when Pym is just about to fall 'into a doze' and Augustus starts up and swears he will 'not go to sleep for any Arthur Pym in Christendom'.⁷³⁶ For Poe, the moment of dozing off is the moment when 'the confines of the waking world blend with those of the world of dreams'.⁷³⁷ Poe calls such moments '*fancies*', but clarifies, 'I use the word *fancies* at random, and merely because I must use some word; but the idea commonly attached to the term is not even remotely applicable to the shadows of shadows in question'. Such *fancies* are 'rather psychal than intellectual', arising 'in the soul', and giving

⁷³⁵ Poe, *Pym*, pp. 47, 57.

⁷³⁶ Poe, *Pym*, p. 48.

⁷³⁷ Poe, *Marginalia*, p. 380.

‘a glimpse of the spirit’s outer world’.⁷³⁸ When Augustus wakes up just as Pym dozes off, he stands in for what should be Pym’s access to the ‘spirit’s outer world’. In this regard, Pym’s ‘ethereality’ is confined by an identity defined by property; and this religious undercurrent is emphasized when Augustus claims he will not sleep for ‘any Arthur Pym in Christendom’. The confining effect of property to Pym’s spiritual ‘elevation’ is illustrated further by the destruction of the *Ariel*. With air being one of the unifying elements between the earth and fire, Pym’s and Augustus’s journey on the *Ariel* is metaphoric for the soul’s condition. Recalling Pym’s description of the penguin rookery as an allegory for the creation of property through labour, but without the poetic sentiment, the fact that the *Ariel*’s ‘frame’ gets smashed ‘to pieces’ by the *Penguin* metaphorically means that the soul’s potential to form a union with God through the Spirit is destroyed by the worldly concerns of property.⁷³⁹ The fact that Augustus pilots Pym’s boat into the condition that causes the accident suggests that the property-related aspects that Augustus stands for are guiding Pym’s soul, while Augustus’s own struggle during the *Ariel*’s destruction further emphasizes how he blocks access to spiritual salvation through a spatial metaphor for ‘elevation’ when he feels himself ‘going rapidly upward’ before his head strikes ‘violently against a hard substance’, implicitly linking him to a limited ‘ascent’.⁷⁴⁰

As Beaver rightly notices, once Pym is out of the hold of the *Grampus*, the equilibrium between Augustus and Pym ‘snaps’ and ‘Augustus’s role is displaced; to be replaced by the hybrid “line manager”’.⁷⁴¹ This displacement is part of a shift from an ‘artificial’ subject without a religious ‘root’ to a subject that has an indigenous claim to the national land. Peters is metonymic for the indigenous ‘principle’, an uncontested and naturalized right to the land, which can enable an artistic labour to be invested into the territory to raise it up to Beauty. As the embodiment of the principle of the land that can be developed into Beauty, Peters’s evolution from savagery to reason parallels Pym’s own spiritual journey, and this evolution is measured in relation to the novel’s organizing trope of ‘halfness’.⁷⁴² Right from the Preface, Peters is called a ‘half-breed Indian’, and his halfness is noted throughout the narrative’s first half: not only does Pym often refer to the ‘line manager’, Peters, as a ‘hybrid’, but after the tempest, Pym finds Peters with ‘a thick line’ ‘pulled so forcibly around his loins as to give him the appearance of

⁷³⁸ *Ibid.*

⁷³⁹ Poe, *Pym*, p. 54.

⁷⁴⁰ Poe, *Pym*, p. 55.

⁷⁴¹ Beaver, p. 27.

⁷⁴² Beaver, p. 28.

being cut nearly in two'.⁷⁴³ An explanation of Peters's 'half' status can be acquired by referring to Schlegel's *Lectures*, particularly his discussion of Caliban. As Schlegel states, Caliban is 'a by-word for the strange creation of a poetical imagination. A mixture of the gnome and savage, half-demon, half-brute, his behaviour is the traces of native disposition and the influence of Prospero's education'.⁷⁴⁴ Schlegel's outline of Caliban is apparent in Peters, a 'dusky, fiendish, and filmy figure', whose 'ruling expression' resembles that 'of a demon'; and this Schlegelian influence continues in Peters's form, with his face 'devoid of natural pliancy' and his limbs, 'of the most Herculean mould', which appear 'to possess no flexibility whatever'.⁷⁴⁵ In short, Peters is likened to a classical statue. This statue-like appearance refers to Schlegel's theory of the ancient art as plastic and the modern as picturesque, with the plastic art being the product of a religion that deifies the 'powers of nature and of the earthly life', and disallows any higher character than that of a 'refined or ennobled sensuality'.⁷⁴⁶ In short, Peters does not have an elevated soul, and as a demon and statue he is barely human as well. Indeed, his hands 'hardly' retain 'a human shape', and his 'mouth' extends 'ear to ear', and has 'exceedingly long and protruding teeth', so that he is aligned with the Platonic soul that resides in the stomach like a 'savage' tied up out of necessity.⁷⁴⁷

Tracing further Peters's connection to Schlegel's reading of Caliban means also to acknowledge Peters's comparison with a 'half-gnome'. This trope of the 'half-gnome' gains resonance by again referring to Fouqué's *Undine*, particularly a scene in which Huldbrand encounters a 'dwarf' while travelling through the forest who stops him for money, then holds up the coin, screaming, 'false gold! – false coin – false coin! – false gold!', and then shows Huldbrand a vision that is later recounted to Undine:

Then, on the sudden, it seemed to me that I could look through the firm green earth as if it were green glass, and its surface appeared round as a ball, within which a multitude of gnomes were playing with gold and silver. On their feet and on their hands they rolled themselves around, flung the precious metals at each other in sport, and mockingly powdered their faces with the gold-dust. My hideous companion stood half within, half

⁷⁴³ Poe, *Pym*, pp. 43, 93, 102, 124, 125.

⁷⁴⁴ Schlegel, II, 179.

⁷⁴⁵ Poe, *Pym*, pp. 229, 85, 85, 84.

⁷⁴⁶ Schlegel, I, 12.

⁷⁴⁷ Poe, *Pym*, pp. 84, 85.

without; the others below reached up to him quantities of gold, which he again flung, with a ringing sound, into the immeasurable abyss below.⁷⁴⁸

Huldrand's vision enforces Poe's themes about property as detrimental to the soul's salvation, particularly the way the dwarf mentions the 'false coin', and throws gold into the 'immeasurable abyss'. Yet while the dwarf and gnomes embody the baseness of property, they are also physically merged with the earth, with the dwarf even standing 'half within, half without' the soil. These fantastic figures thereby instantiate a direct link between the earth and creation of property. Connecting Peters to 'half-gnome' imagery implies that he is associated with both the correlation of land with property, and that he is merged, or part of, the land itself, like the dwarf who is 'half within' the soil. When Peters displaces Augustus he also implicitly shares an 'interchange of character' with Pym; and this collapse of identity gestures outward to a national context in which Native American connections to the land are acknowledged in order to become incorporated into the American self. For this reason, it is crucial that Peters, as an incorporated aspect of Pym, be able to achieve a spiritual evolution, because the transubstantiation of Peters means that the national land can be elevated as well.

Some explanation about this link between Peters and American geography can be gained by comparing *Pym* with *Rodman*. Since Poe never completed *Rodman* it is impossible to offer conclusions about his final intentions for the fragment. Still, though, themes can be foregrounded by comparing the two works, especially considering their mutual references to *The History of the Expedition under the Command of Lewis and Clark*: Pym reads 'the expedition of Lewis and Clark to the mouth of the Columbia' just before he falls asleep in the hold of the *Grampus*, while Rodman's 'editor' alludes to *Lewis and Clark* by way of M. Michau, the French botanist who accompanied Lewis and Clark as far as Kentucky.⁷⁴⁹ In a way, *Rodman* and *Pym* are 'flip-sides' of *Lewis and Clark*, in which the former seems to prelude transcendence, while the latter is immured in a nightmare world of 'desolation'. Several details in *Rodman* conjure forth themes from 'The Domain of Arnheim': Rodman calls an island a 'terrestrial Paradise'; the 'editors' refer to a 'beautiful rivulet' near a 'kind of park'; Rodman admires the 'voluptuous beauty of the country'; the prairies exceed 'in beauty anything told in the Arabian Nights'; the

⁷⁴⁸ *Undine*, pp. 44, 45-46.

⁷⁴⁹ Poe, *Pym*, p. 63, *Rodman*, p. 2.

creek beds look ‘more like Art than Nature’; the shrubberies create ‘paths’ like ‘the alleys in an English flowergarden’; Rodman sees hillocks which may be ‘of natural or artificial construction’; and the voyageurs proceed ‘with spirit’ to ‘one of the most fairy-looking’ islands in the world, which fills his ‘mind with the most delightful and novel emotions’, and resembles what he ‘had dreamed of when a boy, than an actual reality’.⁷⁵⁰ As well, similar to the banks of flowers in ‘Arnheim’, the island is interspersed with ‘the most brilliant flowers, in full bloom, and most of them of fine odour – blue, pure white, bright yellow, purple, crimson, gaudy scarlet’, so that the whole bears ‘a wonderful resemblance to an artificial flower garden’ but is ‘infinitely more beautiful – looking rather like some of those scenes of enchantment which we read of in old books’.⁷⁵¹ In short, *Rodman’s* landscape verifies Ellison’s assertion that in ‘the most rugged of wildernesses – in the most savage scenes of pure nature – there is apparent the *art* of a creator; yet this art is apparent to reflection only; in no respect has it the obvious force of a feeling’.⁷⁵² Although the Creator’s ‘art’ is ‘apparent to reflection only’, as the editors point out, Rodman ‘was, indeed, *the man* to journey amid all that solemn desolation which he, plainly, so loved to depict. His was the proper spirit to perceive; his the true ability to feel’.⁷⁵³ While Rodman’s discipline of mind means that his observational statements ‘always fall within the truth’ without ‘the exaggeration of facts’, in ‘points which relate to *effects*’, Rodman’s ‘temperament leads him to *excess*’, and accord with the ‘hue of his own spirit’, so that ‘his impressions from these facts must have, to ordinary perceptions, a love of exaggeration’.⁷⁵⁴ Yet there is no falsity in this exaggeration, except in view of a general sentiment upon the thing seen and described’.⁷⁵⁵ Basically, Rodman differs from Pym by being able to perceive beyond observational facts to soul-elevating effects. He has the ‘proper spirit to perceive’, and the importance of this perception is signalled in Poe’s italicized emphasis on Rodman as ‘*the man*’, pointing out how his poetic sensibility makes him one of the ‘True Men’ with the poetic sentiment that can unify beauty and property.

The unification of land and spirit is exemplified when Rodman watches a stream stretch ‘away to the westward, until the waters’ meet ‘the sky in the great distance’, before he ruminates

⁷⁵⁰ Poe, *Rodman*, pp. 16, 28, 15, 15, 14, 16.

⁷⁵¹ Poe, *Rodman*, p. 16.

⁷⁵² Poe, ‘Domain’, p. 610.

⁷⁵³ Poe, *Rodman*, p. 2.

⁷⁵⁴ Poe, *Rodman*, p. 12.

⁷⁵⁵ Poe, *Rodman*, p. 12.

‘on the immensity of territory through which those waters had probably passed, a territory as yet altogether unknown to white people, and perhaps abounding in the magnificent works of God’, and feels ‘an excitement of soul’.⁷⁵⁶ In other words, his quest across the national territory is one for Beauty, and his elevated soul is signalled in the elements of water meeting the sky, reaching upward to divinity. Naturally corresponding with this divine quest is the gradual relegation of commercial property. While the expedition’s initial drive is for a ‘source of profit’, over the course of its progression, ‘the pecuniary benefit to be afforded’ becomes ‘the last thing upon which’ the voyageurs speculate, so that men ‘who had travelled thousands of miles through a howling wilderness’ ‘leave behind them without a sigh an entire *cache* of fine beaver skin rather than forego the pleasure of pushing up some romantic-looking river’.⁷⁵⁷

Like the Tsalalians in *Pym*, the Native Americans in *Rodman* lack the elevated soul that enables them to stake a claim to the land, as implied when the same snake imagery associated with the Tsalalians that signals Adam’s fall from Eden is associated with the Native Americans as well: a deserted Indian camp is full of rattlesnakes, a Native American chief is named ‘Little Snake’, and a tribe of Sioux are called the ‘Big Devils’.⁷⁵⁸ Also remarkable is the way Native Americans lack any commercial or military agency. Twice Rodman affirms that he will not engage in trade with the ‘Indians’, stating, ‘It was not our design to trade with the Indians’, and that the skins acquired during the expedition are ‘to be obtained, principally, by hunting and trapping, as privately as possible, and without direct trade with the Indians’.⁷⁵⁹ In part, Rodman’s refusal to trade with the Native Americans stems from the racial and military rhetoric of Indian warfare which he repeats when he calls the ‘Indians’ ‘a treacherous race, not to be dealt with safely in so small a party as ours’.⁷⁶⁰ Such rhetoric continues in his multiple references to Native Americans as ferocious, treacherous, and infesting the country.⁷⁶¹ As well, Rodman seems to share Hamilton’s sentiment in *The Federalist Papers*, that the ‘savage tribes’ ‘ought to be regarded as our natural enemies’, when he calls the Sioux ‘our enemies at heart’, and he echoes military justifications for Indian warfare when he says the Sioux ‘could only be restrained from pillaging and murdering us by a conviction of our prowess’, and that he would ‘rather

⁷⁵⁶ Poe, *Rodman*, p. 11.

⁷⁵⁷ Poe, *Rodman*, pp. 8, 30.

⁷⁵⁸ Poe, *Rodman*, pp. 38, 28, 22.

⁷⁵⁹ Poe, *Rodman*, pp. 10, 11.

⁷⁶⁰ Poe, *Rodman*, p. 11.

⁷⁶¹ Poe, *Rodman*, pp. 8, 22.

provoke hostilities than avoid them' because that is 'our true policy'.⁷⁶² However, *Rodman* itself self-consciously makes reference to this rhetoric through the editorial voice, which notices that the Sioux are 'Mr Rodman's bugbears *par excellence*, and he dwells upon them and their exploits with peculiar emphasis'.⁷⁶³ Furthermore, the canon used to subjugate the Sioux is 'carved and ornamented with serpents', thereby suggesting that military conquest does not establish the poetic bond with the land.⁷⁶⁴ The undermining details associated with Indian warfare continue again when Rodman's conscience bothers him with the statement, 'it is human blood which thou hast shed' after he kills six Sioux.⁷⁶⁵

Thus, while Rodman's journey seems to head in the direction of Beauty and transcendence and Pym's ends in failure, the two texts share a similarity in their disparate representations of 'the Indian': on one hand, tribal groups are outwardly depicted as lacking the 'true' poetic and spiritual connection to the land; on the other, Native Americans are incorporated into the Anglo-American self insofar as indigenous rights to the land become settler rights. This incorporation is suggested in the 'interchange' of character between Peters and Pym, and in *Rodman* an incorporation of indigeneity is suggested in the way Poe limns the title character with physical traits he associates with Native Americans. Specifically, an analogy between Peters and Rodman is suggested in their similarity of appearance: while Peters is 'short in stature' with arms and legs 'bowed in a most singular manner', Rodman is also 'short in stature, not being more than five feet three or four inches high – strongly built, with legs somewhat bowed'.⁷⁶⁶

Yet while Rodman's 'proper spirit' enables him to experience the elevation of soul through the land's inherent Beauty, it is Peters – the metonymy for American territory, and, more specifically, for naturalized American rights to its territory – who becomes elevated toward divinity in *Pym*, as signalled by his progression from irrationality to rationality. In the first half of *Pym*, Peters is 'instigated from the most arbitrary caprice alone' so that it is 'difficult to say if he' is 'at any moment of sound mind', and this unsoundness is exemplified when Peters dances 'about the deck like a madman, uttering the most extravagant rodomontades, intermingled with

⁷⁶² Hamilton in Ferguson, p. 161, Poe, *Rodman*, p. 24.

⁷⁶³ Poe, *Rodman*, p. 21.

⁷⁶⁴ Poe, *Rodman*, p. 10.

⁷⁶⁵ Poe, *Rodman*, p. 26.

⁷⁶⁶ Poe, *Pym*, p. 84, *Rodman*, p. 9.

howls and imprecations' after sighting the hermaphrodite brig.⁷⁶⁷ At the same time Peters acts 'like a madman', he also presents a half-rationality when he restrains the black cook from further butchery, saves Augustus from the 'brutality of the cook' and uses 'language of a consolatory nature' toward Augustus, which occasions Pym 'no less surprise than pleasure', after Captain Barnard is set adrift.⁷⁶⁸

This half-rationality becomes more pronounced following a series of symbolic developments, with the mid-point of Peters's progression coincident with the mid-point of Pym's narrative, the moment of Christ's judgement. At this pivotal turn, the *Grampus* heels over, symbolizing death and rebirth: Pym goes 'completely beneath the vessel', and resigns himself 'to die', only to remerge with the hull's rebound; and once on top the overturned brig, Pym and Peters weep 'aloud like children', their 'intellects so disordered' that they cannot be considered 'in the light of rational beings'.⁷⁶⁹ Shortly thereafter, they are collected by the *Jane Guy*, which, as noted above, carries spiritual connotations as the reflection of Captain Guy's soul, so that their rescue further implies their spiritual rebirth, even though this new soul is one that is kept 'earthly' by worldly concerns of property, as implied by the fact that it is on a 'sealing and trading voyage' 'for any cargo which might come most readily to hand'.⁷⁷⁰

However, while Pym is delimited in his quest to find an Ideal aspect of himself, Peters will necessarily be more successful, because he partially represents an Ideal aspect of the nation. The split between the two is implied after the moment of rebirth, when Peters emerges 'from the opposite side of the hull', and his evolution towards rationality is foreshadowed after his rebirth, when Pym notes that 'Peters, it will be seen, evinced a stoical philosophy nearly as incredible as his present childlike supineness and imbecility'.⁷⁷¹ More metaphorically, Peters's evolution is suggested when he kills the Arctic bear, one of the symbols for the collapse of the spirit into the natural world, thereby foreshadowing how he will transcend the pantheistic barriers to a 'true' spirituality. The Arctic bear's death even echoes the overturning of the hull when the bear tumbles 'into the sea, lifeless, and without a struggle, rolling over Peters' as it falls; and just as

⁷⁶⁷ Poe, *Pym*, pp. 102, 130.

⁷⁶⁸ Poe, *Pym*, pp. 84, 87, 102.

⁷⁶⁹ Poe, *Pym*, pp. 157-158.

⁷⁷⁰ Poe, *Pym*, p. 162.

⁷⁷¹ Poe, *Pym*, p. 157, 158.

Peters throws Pym 'the end of a rope' to pull him out of the ocean, a rope is thrown to Peters so he can secure 'the carcass before entering the boat'.⁷⁷²

The change of Peters's spiritual state is drawn more clearly following his burial in the landslide. In contrast to his 'howls', Peters now calls to Pym 'for aid in the name of God', and this spiritual change is matched by a rational one when Peters endeavours 'to ascertain precisely the extent' of their calamity.⁷⁷³ The culmination of Peters's spiritual progression occurs when he and Pym emerge from the burial as 'the only white men on the island'.⁷⁷⁴ Peters's remarkable transformation into a 'white man' gestures outward to the novel's historical context of incorporation of tribal populations into the American body politic. At the same time, it also perpetuates the novel's spiritual tropes, in that Pym's consideration of himself and Peters as 'white' signals their spiritual resurrection, but still within a pantheistic and representational context. In effect, the physicality of their spiritual resurrection inverts Rodman's relationship with the American territory. Whereas Rodman's journey across the land leads him to the transubstantiation of spirit by recognizing the Beauty inherent in nature so that a type of internalization takes place, Pym and Peters are literally in a union with the earth, with associated imagery emphasizing their spiritual mortality when Pym laments being 'entombed alive' in the 'damp earth', and sharing 'the allotted portion of the dead'.⁷⁷⁵

Yet while Pym and Peters are both 'white', in particular respects Peters necessarily surpasses Pym's spiritual progression: it is Peters who correctly recognizes the 'indentures' on the cliff wall as 'alphabetical characters', while Pym convinces 'him of his error'; and although Peters cannot read the hieroglyphics, he recognizes the sign pointing 'to be white' and 'the region of the south'.⁷⁷⁶ Finally, while Pym perishes, Peters returns to the national territory as a 'resident of Illinois', and since Peters is the one who can 'afford material for a conclusion of Mr Pym's account', it is him who has information of the 'spirit's outer world', so that divinity becomes associated with him in a literal way.⁷⁷⁷ It is for this reason that Augustus's leg comes off in Peters' grasp, and why he becomes a 'mass of putrefaction' in Peters' arms specifically:

⁷⁷² Poe, *Pym*, p. 185.

⁷⁷³ Poe, *Pym*, pp. 208, 209.

⁷⁷⁴ Poe, *Pym*, p. 212.

⁷⁷⁵ Poe, *Pym*, p. 208.

⁷⁷⁶ Poe, *Pym*, pp. 225, 241.

⁷⁷⁷ Poe, *Pym*, p. 240.

Peters represents the potential for divinity found in the American land, while Augustus represents the accumulation of commercial property without divinity.

Conclusion

Referring back to Poe's allusion to the Whore of Babylon, we see that as a trope she also carries national concerns, since the water 'where the whore sitteth' represents 'peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues'. Although women exist in *Pym* only through incidental mention and metaphor, they still maintain an organizing absence; specifically, the nonexistence of idealized women signals an ontological setting and structure in which Beauty and charity are lost. Implicit with this loss is the missing agency to elevate souls in the Pauline sense to the 'true humanity'. In *Pym*, this missing essentiality is intrinsically interwoven into nationhood, first in relation to individual subjects, and then writ large as an allegory about the nation's foundation through the colonial appropriation of land from tribal populations to create property and establish citizenship. For Poe, the elevated soul also equates with the poetic sentiment, and he privileges labour deriving from this sentiment and invested into nature as one which fulfils the 'Deity's purposes'. The creation of property without the poetic sentiment both establishes and is created by an artificial person- and nationhood that is not founded on a national root, or on national Ideality. In regards to Schlegelian theory, the national 'root' is an attempt to essentialize something that is constructed, namely, the nation-state, and thereby emolliate any national disturbances or anxieties. For Poe, the national root serves a similar endeavour to find essentiality, but in a way that privileges the artist and his property. Part of what necessarily constitutes national Ideality is an indigeneity 'springing from the country itself', and this ideal causes a bipartite construction of the Native American in Poe's criticism and literature generally, including *Pym* by way of the Tsalalians and Dirk Peters. Colonial violence and male dismemberment in *Pym* are structured by the Neoplatonism that inflects how Poe perceives Lockean and national ideologies relative to property: the *Jane Guy*'s crew cannot invest the land with the poetic sentiment through labour and their dismemberment and burial reflects their lack of essentiality, while dismemberment drawn in relation to the Tsalalians perpetuates an ideology that precludes aboriginal title based on inherent rational and spiritual deficiencies. Putting these concerns about theology, property, and violence within an epistemological frame is Poe's debate

against pantheistically-informed philosophies, which coincides with and unifies the tropes pertaining to Poe's central focus on the forsaken union with God and divinity.

Chapter Seven: Conclusion

Chapter Summaries

The aim of this thesis was to investigate the trope of male corporeal disarticulation at colonial contact zones in the fiction of Edgar Allan Poe. This investigation required a methodology that assessed how the economic and ideological context of Jacksonian America bore on the intrinsic Neoplatonism of Poe's written corpus. Discussion of Poe's historical period focused on the establishment of civic identity on 'inalienable' property ownership and the recurring literary trope in Jeffersonian and Jacksonian popular literature of masculine identity dismembered through contact with Native Americans as the disruption of this 'inalienable' connection. The examination of Neoplatonism in Poe's fiction took as its focal point the way its structure hinged on the female figure. This methodology provided interpretive leverage into Poe's conceptualizations of property, Native Americans, and imagery of masculine dismemberment instigated by colonial struggles over land and the rights to property. Chapter One outlined the historical factors relevant to the argument of this thesis, including the political and economic importance of land in early America, the ideologies that made civic identity contingent on property ownership, and the literary image of dismembered masculinity as indicative of the anxious site where the right to property is destabilized. The same chapter also examined how Poe positioned himself and his artistic labour within Jacksonian America by assessing how his class ideology organized his extolment of land-ownership, and his self-perception as owning a divine essentiality that enabled the creation of property through his artistic labour. Chapter Two detailed the Neoplatonic philosophies in Poe's corpus, assessing first the Platonic influence on his critical essays, 'The Poetic Principle' and 'The Philosophy of Composition', and then the Pauline inflections in both works. Chapter Two also analyzed the role of women in Poe's theories and tales; it considered the Neoplatonically-inflected criticism and literature that influences Poe's work, and examined how the married female body in particular instantiates 'The Mirror of God', or 'Mirror of Ideality', reflects the soteriological potential of the male soul. Chapter Three applied to Poe's fiction the methodologies put forward in the previous chapters, looking specifically at 'The Oblong Box' and 'The Domain of Arnheim' to outline Poe's ideas of property and its relation to identity. Discussion of 'The

Oblong Box' pointed out how Poe limns identity constituted by property, but without the 'elevated soul', as 'artificial', or as an empty signifier, and how he argues these spiritual deficiencies are characteristic of his national context. Analysis of 'The Domain of Arnheim' showed both how Poe idealizes the artist's relationship with land, and how he figures the investment of the poetic sentiment, or elevated soul, into nature through labour as a way to elevate the landscape to a 'pre-Adamic' Edenic state. Discussion of 'The Oblong Box' and 'Domain of Arnheim' gained resonance by outlining Augustus Schlegel's idea of the national Ideal, and its expression through national art: while the first tale depicts how subjective 'artificiality' is caused by the lack of national essence, 'The Domain of Arnheim' echoes Schlegel's project to express the national 'root'. Chapter Four described how Poe's conceptualization of Native Americans oscillates between sympathy and a drive to displace justified by 'inherent' aboriginal irrationality, with discussion of 'The Masque of the Red Death' relating the lack of sympathy back to the mortal, 'un-elevated' soul and the putrescent body. Analysis of 'The Man That Was Used Up' in Chapter Five utilized the methodologies put forward in Chapters One and Two to interpret the disarticulation of Brevet-Brigadier General John A.B.C. Smith as indicative of both a de-naturalized claim to the land and a lost principle of divinity or immortality as limned within Neoplatonic philosophy. Chapter Six also employed the methodologies laid out in previous chapters to interpret masculinity dismembered at colonial sites in the context of *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym of Nantucket*. Analysis of male dismemberment focused on the Tsalalian scenes of colonial violence, but also considered this violence within both the larger frame of Pym's attempted journey of individuation from an identity constituted solely by property to one containing spiritual essence, and the context of Poe's debates against pantheism and Transcendentalism. In *Pym*, the destruction of Anglo-American subjects was read as a sign of an inability to invest nature with an elevated divinity, or 'poetic principle', while the disarticulation of tribal corpora was interpreted as a perpetuation of national ideologies that prohibited Native American ownership of property.

Future Research

As Leland S. Person observes that 'scholars have devoted little attention to Poe's male characters', and while the study of masculinity in Poe's fiction addresses this significant

knowledge gap, more significant to the study of Poe is how the incohered male figure points to what is most important to his constructions of identity: a naturalized essentiality.⁷⁷⁸ The importance of examining masculinity is underscored by again referring to Bhabha's and Butler's conceptualizations of masculinity. Bhabha defines masculinity as 'that ubiquitous member', 'the pronoun of the invisible man', and 'the object of humanity personified' that 'normalizes and naturalizes difference'; and this definition can be expanded on with Butler's assertion that 'heterosexuality sets itself up as the original, the true, the authentic', 'the norm that determines the real', even while it performs an 'imitation of an imitation', or '*a kind of imitation for which there is no original*'.⁷⁷⁹ Awareness of masculinity's drive to 'normalize and naturalize' itself and assert its privileged place as the 'object of humanity personified' can frame an examination of identity in Poe's fiction, and of early American masculinity more generally, especially the modes by which European-American men centralized their selves in Enlightenment discourse to the detriment of Other subjectivities, and in their preoccupation with property to ideologically delimit and ground civic identities. Dismembered male bodies thereby indicate where ideological assumptions and naturalizations are most in crisis in a way that Other bodies cannot for the reason that they were not considered 'humanity personified' in the same way that Anglo-American propertied men of Jacksonian America were. In this light, while examining masculinity's constructedness means to interrogate what is 'universal' and 'natural', taking up this examination vis-à-vis Poe's fiction also reveals what is most central to his concerns, specifically, property and its relation to essence. Studying the trope of dismembered masculinity in an historical context also leads to central concerns within the Poe's corpus, specifically showing how disarticulation and putrescence signal what for Poe is a lack of essentiality as defined by Christian and Platonic discourses. Embedded within a particular historical moment that valued 'self- and money-making', Poe also sought a naturalizing 'property' that could essentialize identity and give his self 'value'; that is, a divine spirituality that facilitated the creation and recognition of Beauty and marked him as a 'true man'. In this regard, while Poe's depictions of dissolute and disarticulate male corpora signify his condemnation of Jacksonian society, they also project anxieties and excise fears that his own masculinity lacks an essential, cohering property.

⁷⁷⁸ Person, p. 149.

⁷⁷⁹ Bhabha, 'Are You a Man or a Mouse?', pp. 57-58, Butler, pp. 20-22.

Future analysis of Poe's masculinities would further consider his cognizance of this link between property and essentiality in 'Metzengerstein', 'The Business Man', and 'Thou Art the Man', tales which restate the theme put forward in 'The Oblong Box' about 'artificial' identity constituted with property but without a spiritual 'root'. Future work would also include examination of 'A Tale of the Ragged Mountains' for its concerns with destabilized masculinity, national territory, and coloniality. In this tale, themes about an appropriated 'aboriginal' inheritance of the national territory are evinced when its central character, Augustus Bedloe, journeys into the 'virgin' tract of land, where he feels 'that the green sods and grey rocks' 'had been trodden never before by the foot of a human being'.⁷⁸⁰ Yet this implied assumption of national ownership, and national essentiality, is undermined when, in the Ragged Mountains, Bedloe experiences a vision of Chait Singh's colonial insurrection against Warren Hastings in India, thereby suggesting an occluded national 'root'. Poe freely appropriates the physical and textual details of the insurrection from Macaulay's biography of the life of Hastings; and this allusion is significant because, as Macaulay tells it, Hastings's biography is, at heart, a story about a life-long pursuit to regain lost ancestral property.⁷⁸¹ Macaulay recounts how Hastings dreamt of regaining his forefathers' lost estate, how there arose in his mind 'a scheme which, through all the turns of his eventful career, was never abandoned. He would recover the estate which had belonged to his fathers'.⁷⁸² The fact that Poe transposes a British narrative about regaining ancestral property onto the context of American territory undermines both a sense of ownership and of essence. This lack of essentiality is paralleled by Bedloe's own occluded consciousness and spirituality, when he is placed under the influence of Templeton's metempsychosis, or 'transmigration of souls'.⁷⁸³ Future research would examine how the precluded national and spiritual essences tie into the occlusion of Bedloe's identity by the British soldier, 'Oldeb', and their similar deaths by poison.⁷⁸⁴

⁷⁸⁰ Edgar Allan Poe, 'A Tale of the Ragged Mountains', in *The Portable Edgar Allan Poe*, ed. by J. Gerald Kennedy (London: Penguin, 2006), pp. 317-326 (p. 319).

⁷⁸¹ Andrew Horn, 'Poe and the Tory Tradition: The Fear of Jacquerie in "A Tale of the Ragged Mountains"', *ESQ*, 29 (1983), pp. 25-30 (p. 25).

⁷⁸² Macaulay, 'Memoirs of the Life of Warren Hastings, First Governor-General of Bengal. Compiled from Original Papers by the Rev. G.R. Gleig', *Edinburgh Review*, 74 (1841), pp. 160-255 (p. 162).

⁷⁸³ A Modern Pythagorean, 'The Metempsychosis', *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, 19 (1826), pp. 513-529 (p. 515).

⁷⁸⁴ Poe, 'Ragged Mountains', pp. 325, 326, 323.

In addition to analysing Poe's constructions of masculinities, this thesis also addressed knowledge gaps relative to his depictions of women. While several critics acknowledge Platonic elements in Poe's 'married women stories', and recognize the identificatory collapse between his male narrators and their wives, a full examination of how such tropes are structured by an underlying Neoplatonic philosophy has not been put forward. This knowledge gap can be drawn through brief reference of some of the criticism surrounding 'Berenice' and 'Ligeia'. Monika Elbert points out that Poe scholars, such as Eliza Richards and Karen Weekes, acknowledge 'a mirroring effect between women's spirit and Poe's sense of imagination'. While Richards contends that Poe 'drains women of their poetic potency while claiming that the transfer of powers is in the spirit of feminine mimicry', Weekes states that Poe's meditations on women are means to access his own poetic powers, so that 'rather than his ideal as a partner, Ligeia is Poe's ideal of himself'.⁷⁸⁵ Elbert herself asserts that Poe's identification with 'the female psyche is so intense that the narrator's expression of the female voice often becomes somatised, so that there are real visceral symptoms for the teller of woman's story'.⁷⁸⁶ In 'The Identity of Berenice, Poe's Idol of the Mind', Joan Dayan argues that Egaeus's mutilation of his wife results from a totalizing cathexis of her mouth, so that Egaeus's 'final pulling out of her teeth' is 'an extraction of identity so total and so purified of separateness that the final irradiation of the teeth rattling across the floor writes out the derangement of the brain'.⁷⁸⁷ A similar interest in identity is expressed in Catherine Carter's argument that Ligeia represents the 'creative aspect of the mind', and that Poe viewed his creative capabilities as 'so Other to "himself" that he cast it in the most Other terms that a gentleman of his day could conceive: those of gender'.⁷⁸⁸ Turning to the Platonic aspects in 'Berenice', Jules Zanger argues that the central conflict of the tale emerges because 'Berenice belongs to the evanescent, sensible world of time and history', while 'Egaeus aspires to the world of changeless and eternal objects', and so extracts her teeth because they represent her one 'relatively unchanging aspect'.⁷⁸⁹ In a separate article, the same author points up the Christian theological imagery, stating that Morella and Ligeia represent 'the principle of forbidden female sexuality originally embodied in the Garden myth', even though 'there is no

⁷⁸⁵ Monika Elbert, 'Poe and Hawthorne as Women's Amanuenses', *Poe Studies / Dark Romanticism*, 37 (2004), 21-27 (p. 21).

⁷⁸⁶ Elbert, p. 22.

⁷⁸⁷ Dayan, 'The Identity of Berenice', p. 492.

⁷⁸⁸ Catherine Carter, "'Not a Woman": The Murdered Muse in "Ligeia"', *Poe Studies / Dark Romanticism*, 36 (2003), 45-57 (pp. 45-46).

⁷⁸⁹ Zanger, 'Pitfalls', p. 139.

evidence to suggest that 'Poe's Biblical references 'are employed as anything but poetic metaphors of proven power and recognisability', and his 'stories employ religious symbolism but are hardly religious in any other regard'.⁷⁹⁰ Even though Zanger recognizes the Platonic and Christian elements in Poe's fiction he does not relate them to the Neoplatonic structure that gives such elements a unified meaning. In bringing to the foreground the Neoplatonic structure underpinning many of Poe's tales, this thesis addresses the critical gaps pertaining to Poe's works, including those relative to the recurring arguments that tie women to male expression and the flawed methodological tendency to conflate Poe's voice with those of his narrators. By putting forth a model that considers the Neoplatonic conceptualization of women as spiritual reflections of men, this thesis explains how the relationships of Poe's husbands and wives are organized by the 'Mirror of God', with the various female resurrections, reincarnations, and dismemberments characterized by how this reflective dynamic is altered in relation to pantheistic discourses.

Future analysis of Poe's depictions of women would expand on the methodology put forward in this thesis by examining further his 'married women' stories. Details from 'The Fall of the House of Usher', 'Ligeia', and 'Morella' suggest that they are also inflected by the Neoplatonic elements outlined in this thesis. In 'The Fall of the House of Usher', Usher's painting of the 'immensely long and rectangular vault or tunnel' built at 'an exceeding depth below the surface of the earth', with no 'outlet' 'observed in any portion of its vast extent', yet still flooded with 'intense rays' of a 'ghostly and inappropriate splendour', serves as a metaphor for a spiritual belief, or 'perspective', that is earth-bound and dissociated from a true divine union, and thereby provides an interpretive 'key' for examining the epistemological frame of the story.⁷⁹¹ Within this frame, Usher's relationship with Madeline is drawn in a similar fashion to Egaeus's relationship with Berenice, with both women instantiating the male spiritual condition, and with Madeline's burial and unearthing representing a 'non-spiritual' resurrection. In 'Ligeia', Neoplatonic aspects are present through suggestions of the 'ladder of erotics', in which the lover guides the beloved through fields of knowledge to the Beautiful. The narrator describes Ligeia's 'learning' as 'immense', 'gigantic' and 'astounding', notes how she comprehends 'all

⁷⁹⁰ Jules Zanger, 'Poe and the Theme of Forbidden Knowledge', *American Literature*, 49 (1978), 533-543 (pp. 536, 539).

⁷⁹¹ Edgar Allan Poe, 'The Fall of the House of Usher', in *The Portable Edgar Allan Poe*, ed. by J. Gerald Kennedy (London: Penguin, 2006), pp. 126-144 (p. 133).

the wide areas of moral, physical, and mathematical science', and resigns himself 'with a child-like confidence, to her guidance through the chaotic world of metaphysical investigation'.⁷⁹² Combined with these Platonic ideas are Christian soteriological ones pertaining to a union with God when Ligeia says before she dies, 'O God! O Divine Father! [. . .] Are we not part and parcel with Thee?'.⁷⁹³ At the same time, these Neoplatonic elements are in conflict with pantheistic epistemologies when the narrator notes how Ligeia's instruction renders 'vividly luminous the many mysteries of the transcendentalism in which' they are 'immersed'.⁷⁹⁴ Written one month after 'Berenice', 'Morella' also engages with notions of Platonic Ideality, its epigram referencing Plato's *Symposium* and H.N. Coleridge's *Study* with its epigram of 'Itself, by itself solely, ONE everlastingly, and single'.⁷⁹⁵ The narrator's mention of 'identity which is termed personal' as defined by 'Mr. Locke', and his chagrin at the 'too perfect *identity*' shared between mother and daughter, alludes to Locke's questions of identity retained after the resurrection; and this soteriological theme is carried further when the narrator says that the child's eyes 'too often looked down into the depths of my soul'.⁷⁹⁶ When Morella foresees the narrator wearing his 'shroud on earth, as do the Moslemin at Mecca', implying his soul will be physically incarnated, she displays a cognizance of her function in the dynamic of the 'Mirror of Ideality'; and this awareness is further suggested when she tells the narrator, 'The days have never been when thou couldst love me'.⁷⁹⁷ Like Berenice, Morella reflects the condition of her husband's soul, and the lack of 'soul-elevating' love is written in her corporeal condition, so that the narrator's resurrection is wholly a physical one, as suggested by her 'rebirth' immediately following her death.

In his essay on Poe, D.H. Lawrence argues that Poe's best works, such as 'Ligeia' and 'The Fall of the House of Usher' are really 'love stories', or the 'ghastly stories of the human soul in its disruptive throes'.⁷⁹⁸ Although Lawrence relates his argument to an implied psychoanalytic model of Eros and Thanatos, he hits on an important undercurrent in much of

⁷⁹² Edgar Allan Poe, 'Ligeia', in *The Portable Edgar Allan Poe*, ed. by J. Gerald Kennedy (London: Penguin, 2006), pp. 111-125 (p. 115).

⁷⁹³ Poe, 'Ligeia', p. 118.

⁷⁹⁴ Poe, 'Ligeia', p. 115.

⁷⁹⁵ Poe, 'Morella', p. 105.

⁷⁹⁶ Edgar Allan Poe, 'Morella', in *The Portable Edgar Allan Poe*, ed. by J. Gerald Kennedy (London: Penguin, 2006), pp. 105-110 (p. 106, 108).

⁷⁹⁷ Poe, 'Morella', p. 107.

⁷⁹⁸ Lawrence, p. 111.

Poe's fiction. The Neoplatonic philosophy that influences Poe's writing and positions his women as 'Mirrors of God' is organized around the concept of love as a component of the Spirit that elevates the soul to a union with God. Since it is the wife's love for her husband that transforms her body into a mirror of the male soul, the disfigured and reincarnated bodies of Berenice and Morella are signs of unrequited love stories. Even Poe's stories about property, coloniality, and dissolute and dismembered masculinity are structured to an extent by theological figurations of love that basically define all sins as transgressions against charity, with the broken bodies of Brevet-Brigadier General John A.B.C. Smith and Augustus Barnard instantiating souls that are not elevated to a union with God. In part, Poe's depictions of broken male bodies stem from his recognition that property is essential for the constitution of the male self, but also from his condemnation of its extolment over charity. In turn, this nuanced attitude towards property ownership reflects the way Poe saw himself as both a poet and as one of an 'aristocratic' class with a superior capability for creating property, as noted in the way he values 'love', 'the intellect', 'beauty', and 'moral health', and in his letter to Helen Whitman, in which he requests her financial aid to finance the *Stylus* and remarks, 'Would it not be "glorious" [. . .] to establish, in America, the sole unquestionable aristocracy – that of intellect – to secure its supremacy – to lead & to control it'.⁷⁹⁹ At the same time, this is not to 'overly-romanticize' Poe, who still subscribes to ideologies that presuppose Anglo-America's rational superiority over racialized Others. This racialized hierarchy is prevalent in his bipartite depictions of Native Americans as both objects of sympathy and irrational beings to be displaced, as enacted in the difference between the Tsalalians and Dirk Peters, and it can be redrawn by reading Poe's review of J.K. Paulding's *Slavery in the United States*, in which he speaks of 'the moral influences flowing from the relation of master and slave, and the moral feelings engendered and cultivated by it' before mentioning how the 'peculiar nature' 'of the negro' is grounded in the 'essential changes in the different races of animals'. These 'essential changes' are explained as appurtenant of 'the will of God' and point up a Pauline teleology when Poe states, '[African-Americans] are, like ourselves, the sons of Adam, and must therefore, have like passions, and wants and feelings and

⁷⁹⁹ Edgar Allan Poe in Betsy Erkkila, 'The Poetics of Whiteness: Poe and the Racial Imaginary', in *Romancing the Shadow: Poe and Race*, ed. by J. Gerald Kennedy and Liliane Weissberg (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2001), pp. 41-74 (p. 67).

tempers in all respects. This, we deny, and appeal to the knowledge of all who know'.⁸⁰⁰ This tension and dialectic between the 'poetic principle' and racialized discourse in Poe's work is approached by John Carlos Rowe, who argues, 'It is thus not just the conventionality of Poe's racist and imperialist fantasies that we should condemn but also the extent to which Poe employed his undisputed powers as a creative writer to weave such fantasies into what has for so long been appreciated for its aesthetic qualities'.⁸⁰¹ Rowe's statement points to the central dilemma of studying Poe. On one hand, and at heart, many of Poe's tales are well-written engagements with ideals of love, whether as condemnations of material gain over charity, or meditations on love's unknowability by empirical means. On the other, the same rhetoric of Beauty and the 'elevated soul' is interwoven with an ideology that justifies a racial hierarchy and a colonial appropriation of Native American lands. Studying the disarticulate male body in Poe's fiction against his historical and ideological backdrop uncovers the underwritten logic that ties together displacement and dismemberment with charity and love.

⁸⁰⁰ Edgar Allan Poe, 'Slavery in the United States. By J.K. Paulding. New York: Harper and Brothers. The South Vindicated from the Treason and Fanaticism of the Northern Abolitionists. Philadelphia: Published by H. Manly', in *The Complete Works of Edgar Allan Poe*, ed. by James A. Harrison, 17 vols (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell and Company, 1902), VIII, pp. 265-275 (pp. 270-271).

⁸⁰¹ John Carlos Rowe, 'Edgar Allan Poe's Imperial Fantasy and the American Frontier', in *Romancing the Shadow: Poe and Race*, ed by J. Gerald Kennedy and Liliane Weissberg (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2001), pp. 75-105 (p. 95).

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